

A person is shown from the waist up, wearing a dark blue traditional Chinese garment with a large yellow graphic overlay. The graphic is a stylized, abstract shape that resembles a large 'C' or a brushstroke. The person is also wearing a light-colored, textured garment (possibly a shawl or a bag) that is tied around their waist with a wide, light-colored sash. Several circular, colorful ornaments (possibly mirrors or decorative discs) are attached to the sash and the garment. The background is slightly blurred, showing a red stool and a person sitting in the distance.

China

C H I N A T O U R I S M

WANDERING TRAVELLERS IN YUNNAN

A LEGEND OF FINE WINE — SHAOXING
THE LAST VIRGIN LAND OF TAIWAN

279

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FOCUS ON XINJIANG

On the vast land of Xinjiang in Northwest China, there are mountains, basins, deserts and lakes, all providing tourists with numerous attractions — ruins of ancient cities and tombs along the Silk Road; Turpan, an oasis in the desert; Kanas Lake, a gem embedded in the Altay Mountains; Bayanbulak, the Swan Lake; and the world's second largest desert, the Taklimakan. The minority ethnic groups living in Xinjiang, such as the Uyghur, Kazak, Mongolian, Uzbek, Tajik, Xibe, Kirgiz and Tatar, all have their own unique and colourful culture.



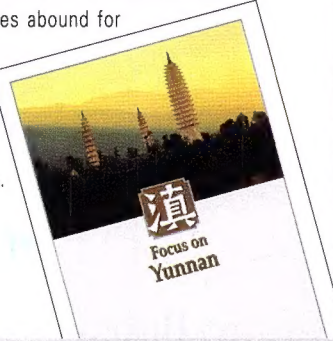
FOCUS ON SHAANXI

Shaanxi is the cradle of the Chinese civilisation and Xi'an was the capital of 13 dynasties. This has left Shaanxi a rich legacy of historical sites and cultural relics. In the provincial capital Xi'an, there is the fascinating terracotta army unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor, Qin Shihuang; the tomb of Tang-dynasty Wu Zetian, China's first empress; and the stele forest. The province's beauty is capped with the sheer cliffs of Mount Huashan and the yellow earth of the Loess Plateau.



FOCUS ON YUNNAN

The mountainous wonderland of Yunnan enjoys a favourable warm climate all year round. Its capital, Kunming, sitting alongside Yunnan's largest lake, Dianchi, has the honourable name of "Spring City". The province is full of natural wonders and cultural relics, such as the Stone Forests, the Shangri-la, and the ancient cities of Dali and Lijiang. With over 20 diverse ethnic groups making up about one-third of the population, opportunities abound for you to see their characteristic cultures and customs.



The Call of China's West

FOCUS ON TIBET The Tibet Autonomous Region of China is a land of mystery for tourists, a land of wonders for explorers, a land of purity for Buddhists, and the ultimate challenge for mountaineers. Its beautiful landscapes, unique geographical features and rich cultural legacy continue to attract an increasing number of visitors.

The countless attractions of Tibet make it impossible to include them all in one book. This photographic publication offers an introduction to some of the Region's most celebrated features: the Potala Palace and its precious collection of cultural relics; the Jokhang Temple with strings of worshippers prostrating themselves before it; the Shoton Festival and the Sunning of Buddha ceremony; the ruins of the mystical Guge Kingdom; and the amazing Qiangtang Grassland...

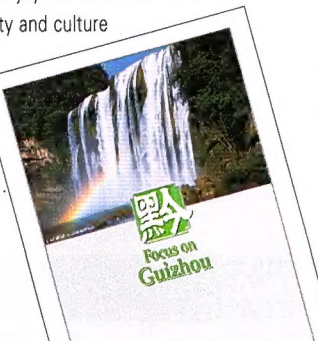
At the same time, *Focus on Tibet* outlines the six major routes to Tibet and the many stunning landscapes found along the way.



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FOCUS ON GUIZHOU

Guizhou is a land of splendid natural scenery. Its towering mountains and karst landforms team up with the gurgling rivers and magnificent waterfalls to form a wonderful work of Mother Nature. Huangguoshu Waterfalls and the limestone caves are the province's most frequented scenic spots. The 17 ethnic groups living in the picturesque province further colour the land with vivid customs and joyous festivals. It is its natural beauty and culture that make Guizhou a perfect travel destination.



FOCUS ON GUANGXI

Unusual topography has endowed the province with numerous spectacular karst formations — limestone caves, pinnacles and rocks. The most famous and enchanting scenic spot is Guilin, and the most travelled route, on the Lijiang River from Guilin to Yangshuo. The coastal city of Beihai has the country's largest beach, the Silver Beach. Other attractions include the diverse traditional customs of ethnic minorities, the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the mysterious Huashan cliff paintings.



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Photos & Article by Dianna Lau

There have been times when a beautiful postcard, a moving film scene, or a nameless place in a jigsaw puzzle urged me to travel. Honest and plain local people, or fellow travellers I ran into along the way, have become the most memorable part of my travels. Through them I learnt about the places I visited and even gained a new understanding of myself.



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44 Nature In the Great Northern Wilderness

Photos and Article by Zhuang Yanping

There is a huge area colored in mysterious black on the map of China; it has the shape of a swan with its head held high. This vast wilderness of 5.4 million ha is in Heilongjiang Province. In ancient times, it was a huge, isolated marshland overgrown with weeds as a frigid wasteland, and it was called the "Great Northern Wilderness".

50 Discoveries Shaoxing — Home of Yellow Rice Wine

Photos and Article by Xie Guanghui

Shaoxing, a town in Zhejiang Province of eastern China, is renowned for its wine. Shaoxing wine has been prized for more than 2,000 years, and it still stands above all other Chinese wine today, due to its exceptional quality.

56 On the Way Hua-Tung Coast — The Last Virgin Land of Taiwan

Photos and Article by Chen Tianquan

The Hua-Tung Coast in the east has been carved by eons of breaking waves, shaping a wonderland of natural landforms. Its primitive appearance earns the title of the "Last Virgin Land of Taiwan".



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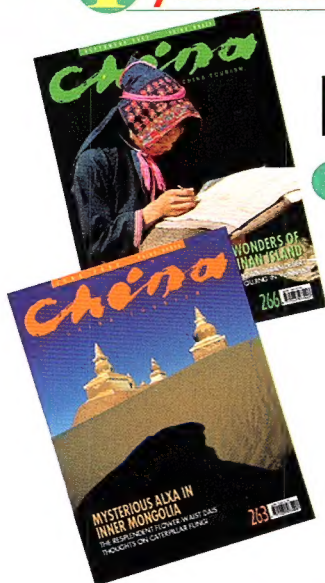
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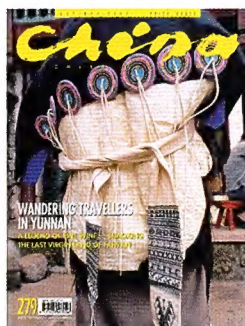
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The seven tags represents the seven North Pole Stars, and they honor the diligent Naxi women.
(by Li Zhixiong)



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Window of the World

Photos and Article by Huang Yanhong

Shenzhen's Window of the World, a popular theme park, has increased new scenic spots and also created a new theatric program. The new show "New Millennium" presents the brilliant ancient civilization to the audiences.

62 Landscapes

An Autumn Trip to Kanas Lake

Photos by Li Xueliang and Zhong Weiguo Article by Zhong Weiguo

Xinjiang is known as one of the most beautiful places of China, encompassing a vast area and a landscape that boasts a special kind of ice beauty. In there you can find Lake Kanas, recognized as the "Switzerland of China".

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Conquering the Heights — Chung Kin Man

Photos Provided by Chung Kin Man Article by Zhu Jie



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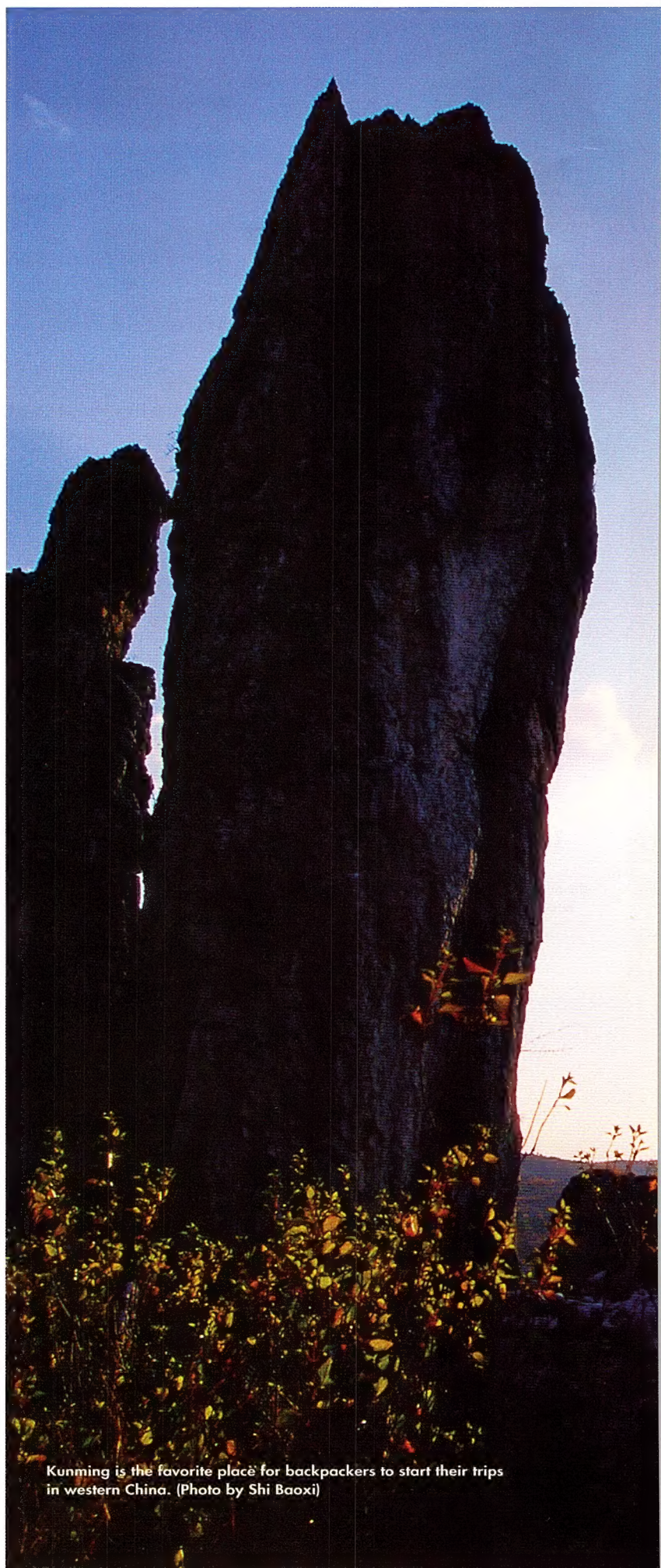
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Kunming is the favorite place for backpackers to start their trips
in western China. (Photo by Shi Baoxi)

A person with a backpack is silhouetted against a bright sunset sky, standing on a dark, jagged rock formation. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a bright orange and yellow near the horizon. The person is looking out over the landscape, which includes some sparse, dry vegetation on the right.

FROM THE EDITOR

Wander Your Way

Many would see solo wandering travellers as either impractical or courageous, but rarely can people see how ambitious they really are.

True, wanderers may not know exactly what they want or what their dreams are, but they certainly know what they don't want. They don't want to be dull by ordinary lives that demand repetitive routines. They believe that life is beyond what they are familiar with and they are searching for a different way.

Of course solo travellers are equally vulnerable to loneliness and danger just like any others, but still, they'd rather take a leap of faith to explore new frontiers, and pay whatever price for the sake of freedom.

The world calls out to them, and they choose to respond.

Every journey is as unique as a fingerprint, but I hope that it will free your spirit, just like many others who decide to be the captains of their souls.

Don't worry, there are many wanderers out there just like you, whether they will be in Kunming, Lijiang or Deli, you're bound to meet them along your way.

Expand your horizon. Renew your spirit. Wander your way.

Ancient Towns in East China Retain Traditional Style Despite Modernization

Near the Yangtze River delta of eastern China, a modernized economic powerhouse, six towns insist to keep their traditional appearances, and refuse to tear down their centuries-old buildings.

These small towns include Luzhi, Zhouzhuang and Tongli, and they are proud of their white walls, black tile roofs, long narrow lanes, and stone arch bridges. The residents enjoy staying outdoor through the summer, eating and chatting in their green and shady surroundings.

Such scenes are rare in the Yangtze Delta nowadays, because modernization began in the 1980s has filled most towns with sky-scrapers, wide roads, steel bridges and huge factories.

Due to careful preservation, these traditional houses, historic sites, and fascinating gardens remain almost intact within the one-square kilometer of the town.

The six towns spent a total investment of three billion yuan (366 million U.S. dollars) on sanitary system upgrade, infrastructure improvement and pollution treatment. The efforts paid off. As many as 7.9 million travellers visited the six towns last year, increased the local tourism revenue up to 1.5 billion yuan (183 million U.S. dollars). The annual income per capita of the six towns peaked at 5,000 yuan (610 U.S. dollars) last year, which is almost same as the industrialized towns nearby.



Shanghai Hosts First Travel Joint Venture

Two giant travel companies in China and the United Kingdom announced on Wednesday about a strategic partnership to explore the potential travel markets in China.

The Shanghai Jin Jiang International Group and the UK's Business Travel International have signed a contract of intent to jointly establish a new company to explore and develop new travel markets.

The new company, the first of its kind in Shanghai, will mainly provide services for those coming to China for business. It will open in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou on Jan.1, 2004.

Statistics from the State Tourism Bureau indicate that those who come to China for business contributed approximately 4.2 billion US dollars to China's economy last year, and the amount is likely to increase by 20 percent each year. Out of the 2.72 million overseas travelers to Shanghai last year, 60 percent came for business.

South China Opens Charter Flight to Kuala Lumpur

A Malaysian Airline Boeing 737 touched down in mid September in Guilin city, a famous resort of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, marking the beginning of direct air links between Guilin and Kuala Lumpur.

The charter flight from Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaysia, was created to enhance tourism and strengthen the ties between the two cities. Before that, travellers have to make a detour via Hong Kong.

The plane will make a round trip once every Saturday.

China Issues Stamps Commemorating Ancient General Yue Fei

A set of stamps was issued by China State Post Bureau (CSPB) in Sept. to commemorate Yue Fei (1103-1142), a well-known general in ancient China.

Yue, a native of Anyang in central China's Henan Province, was known for his courageous acts and personal integrity in fighting against intruders.

The stamps to be launched in Anyang is a set of three stamps and a sheetlet.

Anyang is home of the treasure tortoise shells with inscriptions of the Shang Dynasty (16th-11th century BC). It is also the birthplace of the Book of Changes (Yi-Ching), an famous fortune-telling manuscript.

China has issued stamps featuring inscription-covered tortoise shells and Museum of Shang Dynasty Relics before, and now, it is Yue's turn.

Ancient Rampart in NW China Damaged by Rainfall

A section of preserved ancient rampart in Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi province, was damaged by consecutive rainfalls in the past 10 days.

The wall built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) suffered from damages at its 100m-long section, which is buried in the ground and not covered with stones and bricks.

Local cultural relic workers took emergency measures to repair and fortify. Visitors were forbidden to get close to the wall.

Xi'an is one of the country's famous ancient capitals. The Ming Dynasty rampart here is the only fully-preserved wall in the country. The provincial government of Shaanxi has invested over 200 million yuan (over 24 million US dollars) in maintenance since 1983.



Post Office Begins Business in the Forbidden City

The Beijing Municipal Postal Bureau announced that a new post office in the Palace Museum, also known as the Forbidden City, is open to serve.

It is the first post office that has ever been built inside a scenic site.

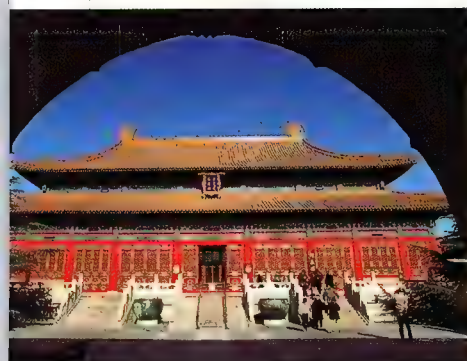
The post office is situated to the west of Kunning Gate, one of the must-see tourist attractions close by the former Imperial Palace. The branch not only sells over 100 kinds of stamps, envelopes and postcards, but it also offers services like domestic and overseas mailing and packaging.

On top of that, an ATM outlet will be installed at the office as well.

An official of the Beijing Municipal Postal Bureau said that building a post office in the Forbidden City was to seek mutual benefits with the tourism industry.

The Palace Museum is located right behind Tian'anmen Rostrum at the centre of Beijing. From the mid-14th to the early 20th centuries the palace housed 24 emperors, from the Ming (1368-1644) through to the Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties.

It attracts over 7 million visitors annually with its magnificent architecture and historic art collections.



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Sainte Croix — the Land of Music Boxes

Switzerland Sainte Croix in Switzerland is near the border of France. Because of the CIMA, this small town unknown to the world has suddenly become the land of music boxes. Its meticulously made and complicated music boxes are famous. A wide variety of classic music boxes on display in the CIMA make visitors gasp in admiration. Visitors follow a French or an English guide to enter the CIMA. First of all, the

guide introduces the materials and tools for making music boxes, then gives a brief account of the history of each exhibit, and turns on the exhibits on the spot, letting visitors appreciate the beautiful music.

The exhibits in the CIMA are too numerous to be mentioned one by one. All of them were the results of the painstaking work of mechanists and artists. The masterpiece in the CIMA is a music box in the shape of a clown reading by lamplight at night, looking sleepy. The clown is lifelike, with vividly portrayed movements. To the accompaniment of music, this work of art makes every viewer intoxicated.

Tourists may get on a train in Lausanne and go to Yverdon Les Bain, where they can transfer a small train and go to Sainte Croix. The whole trip takes about one hour.

Admission: 11 Switzerland francs (about HK \$63) for an adult; or seven Switzerland francs (about HK \$40) for a child, including the service fee for a guide.

Open: 13:30-18:00 (The museum is not open on Monday)

(Article and photos by He Zhiwen)

A Brand New Pedestrian Peak Trail

Hong Kong The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Home Affairs Department have just promoted the Pedestrian Peak Trail for which they have

prepared for a year, so as to publicize green culture and natural resources. The pedestrian trail goes through Pofulam and Dragon and Tiger Mountain Countryside Park and consists of five parts: Plants, Animals, History of the Xiangjiang River, Chinese Culture and Climate and Environment. Along the pedestrian trail, there are 20 introduction boards in Chinese, English and Japanese.

The research path of local trees in Pofulam takes the lead in Hong Kong in introducing the species of local plants. Along the path, visitors can appreciate celtis, silverback artocarpus, smallfruit fig, gordonia, and other rare species. This path takes about 45 minutes to complete. Visitors can also have a nice view of the Victoria Harbor on the way.

Website: <http://www.peaktrial.net>



New Erdaoqiao Market

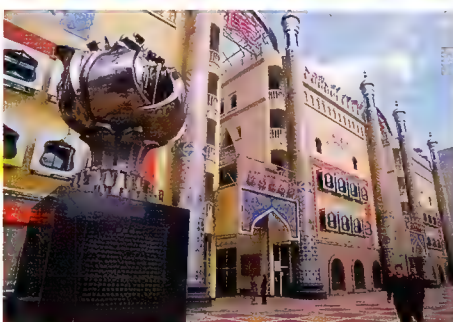
Many tourists are very familiar

with Erdaoqiao Market in Urumqi, Xinjiang. However along with the development of Urumqi, the Erdaoqiao Ethnic Commercial and Trade Center has been founded, consisting of the renovated Erdaoqiao Market, International Bazaar, and Xinjiang Ethnic Street.

The former Erdaoqiao Market, a shopping street lined by numerous stalls selling ethnic commodities, in Tianchi Road, has been replaced by a three-storey shopping building. The first floor mainly sells ethnic arts and crafts, such as embroidered hats, tie-dyed silk, small Yengisar knives, and dried fruits. The second and third floor mainly sell Hotan and Kashi carpets, and ethnic costumes.

Facing the Erdaoqiao Market is the International Bazaar, which will start business this month. With a construction area of 80,000m², this bazaar is 9,000m² larger than the Turkish market selling traditional arts and crafts. The International Bazaar will be composed of five major parts — Xinjiang Ethnic Commerce Shopping Plaza, Xinjiang Ethnic Handicraft Trade Center, Xinjiang Famous Products Exhibition Center, the Heart of Central Asia, and Ethnic Outdoor Market. The most eye-catching is the 80-meter-high circular pagoda. The International Bazaar displays the architectural style of Islam, with yellow as the main color, and the outer walls built with polished bricks.

Xinjiang Ethnic Street adjacent to Erdaoqiao Market is located at Shanxi Lane in Longquan Street (which meets Tianchi Road). This newly built street consists of five large buildings, connected with corridors. Now the shopping street is soliciting business and copartners. In the five large buildings, customers can find Ethnic Food Street, Ethnic Customs Street, European and Asian Commodity Street, and Jewelry and Famous-brand Products Street, with a total of over 1,600 shops, selling all kinds of commodities produced in Xinjiang. On the fifth floor, there is a museum jointly run by Xinjiang Ethnic Street Travel Company and Xinjiang University, where visitors can find four miniature landscape halls. Various models in the museum fully display the geographical and urban construction conditions of various autonomous prefectures, prefectures and cities of Xinjiang.



Erdaoqiao Ethnic Commercial and Trade Center will represent the prosperity of the ancient Silk Road.



Special Auction for the Limited Tribute Wine Made in the 25th Year of the Rein of Emperor Daoguang

Guangzhou, summer 1996. Four wooden wine holders buried in the 80-cm deep underground were found when the old workshop of Lingchuan Winery was rebuilt in Jinzhou City, Liaoning Province. It is amazing that fragrance of the old wine still lingers. The boxes were pasted by xuan paper, and some of the Manchu language and Chinese characters were still faintly visible, such as the 1845 year of Emperor, names of the partners of the winery, and the title of the wine.

Judged by specialists from various fields, the wine was sealed and put underground in the 25th year of the rein of Emperor Daoguang and was the product of Tongshengjin winery during the Qing Dynasty. According to historical record, Tongshengjin winery was built in the 6th year of the Qing Dynasty and its product was an article of tribute. The purity of the wine was determined as 53 percent and the color of the wine is light yellow with a special fragrant smell and agreeable aftertaste. It can be drunk directly.

In July 1998, a certificate was issued by the headquarters of the Guinness Book of Records in London, England to confirm that the tribute wine made of the 25th year of the reign of Emperor is the oldest pit-stored wine. Then a plan for the protection, study and utilization for the wine was submitted by the State Cultural Relics Bureau. The plan for auction some of the wine was approved and the income is used for the protection of the unearthed wine and wooden wine holders and research work as well.

In 1999, the China Guardian Auctions Co. Ltd. once publicly sold 100 kg of the wine at auction and the highest price was 60,000 yuan for one kg. Another 100 kg of the wine was sold at auction again by this company in the International Meeting Center of Baitiane Hotel, Guangzhou and the prices were between 18,000 to 25,000 yuan for half kg.



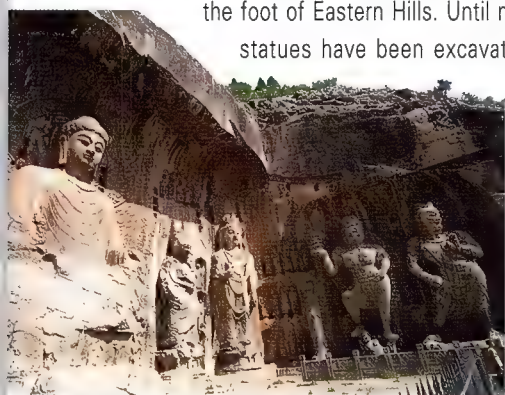
Yichang Speeding up the Building of Scenic Sites Along the Three Gorges

Yichang in Hubei Province is close to Xiling Gorge, one of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River, and is an important harbor of the Yangtze River and a newly built industrial city. New scenic spots are going to be built and old ones have been improved in Yichang following the construction of the dam of the Yangtze River. The road and dock of Huangniuyan Scenic Spot are under construction, and an embryonic form will be completed in August. At the same time, a comprehensive development for the middle section of the Jiuwanxi River is underway. Large-scale renovation has been done for the section of drifting and fifty environment-friendly leisure boats have been prepared for tourists. Visitors are welcome as soon as the Pinghu River is filled with water. The under water construction of the tourist dock of Zigui Harbor has been completed. The construction of the museum for the above ground relics, the largest one of its kind in China, has began in Fenghuang Mountain, Zigui County. Also, the construction of Junyao International Airport in Yichang, the Yichang Tourists Center of the Three Gorges and tourist area of the Dam of the Three Gorges are speeding up as well.

New Discoveries in Longmen Grottoes

Longmen To prevent the grottoes from being eroded by tail exhaust discharged by vehicles, Longmen Scenic Zone started to construct the pedestrian scenic zone. During the construction, workers discovered grottoes and Buddhist statues on the southern side of Kanjing Temple at the foot of Eastern Hills. Until now, over 10 Buddhist statues have been excavated. According to the

experts, these statues were carved during the reign of Emperor Wu Zetian of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A. D.), at the same period of the statue of Vairocana in Fengxiang Temple.



Regular Tourism Buses Go from Zhangjiajie to Fenghua

Human The Sunshine Team of the Zhangjiajie Yunxing Tourism Transport Co., Ltd has shuttle buses to go between Zhangjiajie and Fenghua from 8:00 to 12:00 a.m. everyday, making it easy for tourists to visit Zhangjiajie and Fenghua. Each luxury Golden Dragon-brand bus has 35 seats. The departure tracks are Wulingyuan Bus Station and the parking lot of Fenghuang County Government Hotel, respectively. The shuttle bus will pass Furong Town, Guzhang and Jishou, and run about five hours and a half. Price of a ticket: \$58.

Website: www.China-T-resort.net



Visiting Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol

Netherlands: Amsterdam Rijksmuseum set up a branch at the Amsterdam Airport Schiphol at the end of last year. Since it was opened to the public, Schiphol Branch of Rijksmuseum has been favored by many passengers. In a busy season, the museum receives over 100 passengers a day. The Schiphol Branch displays art works by master painters in the 17th century, making visitors enjoy the splendor of the "golden era of Netherlands."

The art works displayed at Schiphol Branch include those by Rembrandt van Rijn, Jan Steen, Jacob van Ruisdael and Ferdinand Bol. The most distinguished work is a portrait of Saskia by Rembrandt van Rijn for his wife. The Schiphol Branch also organizes different exhibitions irregularly, and most of the exhibits are the collections of Rijksmuseum.

The Schiphol Branch of Rijksmuseum is located between the boarding gates starting with the letter "E" and "F," close to Holland Casino. The exhibits are on display on the second floor, and the first floor is occupied by stores selling souvenirs.

The website of the Amsterdam Airport Schiphol: <http://www.schiphol.nl/>

The website of the National Museum: <http://www.rijksmuseum.nl>

(Netherlands Tourism Bureau)

A Nice Restaurant to Taste Imperial Food

Beijing Where is the right place for people to taste imperial food in Beijing? Tan Family Restaurant in Beijing Hotel, No 33 East Chang'an Steet, Beijing, is it. Though the food is expensive but rest assure that you are having top quality food, such as swallow's nest, shark's fin and delicacies of every kind. And the restaurant is furnished with all kinds of fancy frills inside out. This restaurant and the Beijing Hotel both won the prize of "Five-star Diamond Brand" issued by Society of Hospitality Science of the United States earlier this year. This is the only international prize won in the service field in China and it is a fine-quality service prize with authority generally acknowledged internationally.

The brand name of Tan family food was established by the father, Tan Zongjun, a bureaucrat at the end of the Qing Dynasty and early period of the Republic of China.

Both the southerners and northerners like to eat the food. Generally speaking, seasonings, such as Chinese prickly ash and ground pepper, are not used before and after the dishes are cooked, keeping an original flavor. The most important is the duration and degree of cooking. The cooking method of roasting, baking, braising, and steaming are skillful mastered.

You may pay several dozen to several hundred yuan for eating Tan family food or for a banquet you may even need to pay that several hundred up to several thousand yuan.

Open time of the restaurant: 11:00 am to 22:00 pm

Telephon No: (0)10-65137766 extension: 288, 388



Guildhall Left Behind by Hakka People Before Moving to the West More Than Three Hundred Years Ago

Sichuan Nanhuagong — Guangdong Guildhall at the foot of Ereshan Mountain, Luodai Town, in the middle section of the Longquan Mountain, Sichuan, is 18 km from downtown of Chengdu.

Among the 22,000 population of Luodai Town, 19,000 are Hakka people. Their ancestors moved here from Lingnan three hundred years ago to reclaim wasteland. They built the Guangdong Guildhall in the 11th year (1746 A.D.) of the reign of Emperor Qianlong for the convenience of getting together. With a building area of 3,310m² it consists of a front courtyard-- a stage built for shows and wing-rooms on both sides, and a back courtyard-three halls, two patios and a corridor leading to the back door. The main hall, also known as Yuewangdian (Hall of the King of Yue), has five rooms in width, six columns in depth and 16m in height and a Yuewang (king of Yue) terrace was built behind the hall making the Hakka people looking in the direction of their hometown.

There is a teahouse and a restaurant in the Guildhall to provide Hakka tea and food and all the people working in the teahouse and restaurant are Hakka people.

You may take 219 (from Wuguizhao to Luodai), 233 (from Wuguizhao to Longquanyi) or 218 (from bus station of east city to Longquanyi) public buses to go to Luodai or Longquanyi.

(Written and photos by Xu Houkun)



2003

中國

烹飪王國遊

Wonderful Scenery · 品中華美食 · 賞華夏勝如

CULINARY KINGDOM
CHINA 2003

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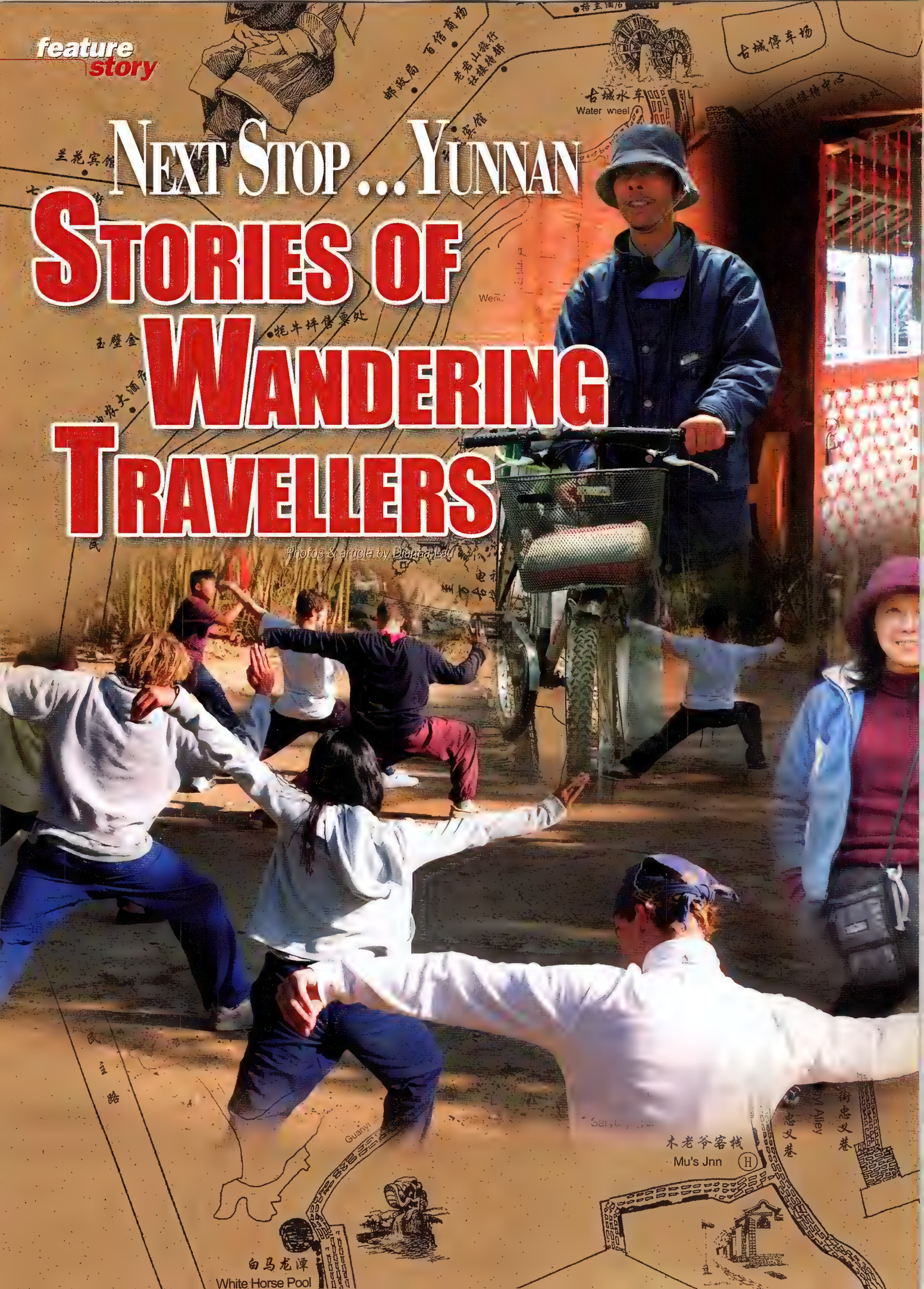
NEXT STOP... YUNNAN

STORIES OF

WANDERING

TRAVELLERS

Photos & article by Eleanor Leung



丽江老馆(阿佬姆)一天的理想生活:

起床后,提着鸟笼,到狮子山的万古楼遛鸟。

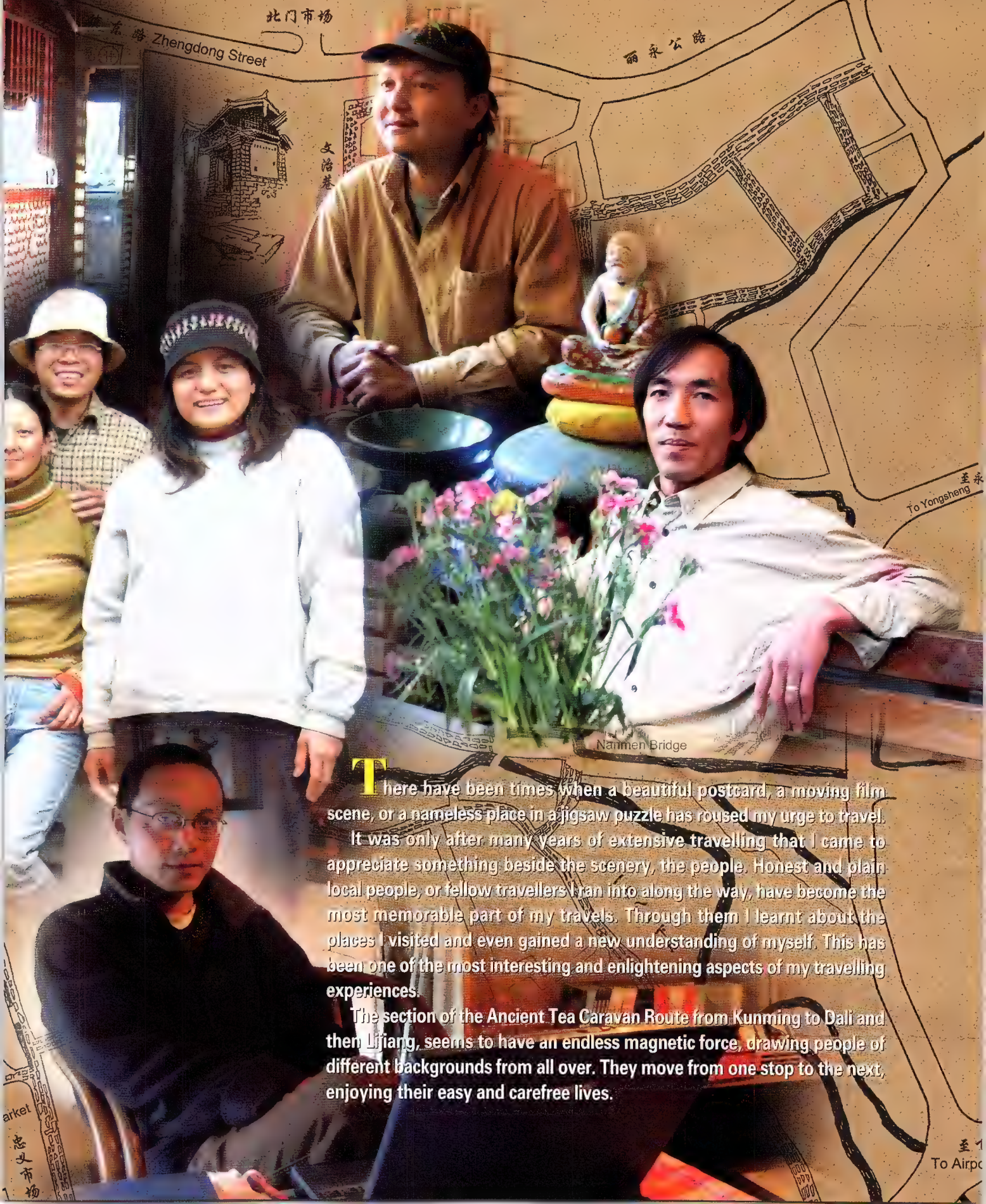
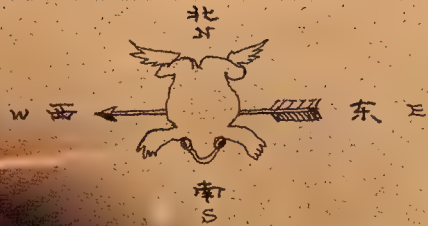
回家看看自己最珍贵的兰花,泡一杯浓茶,坐下来,吃老太太做好的粑粑。

打扫完院子、浇好花,坐下来看书报。

下午到古乐舍去,遇到一位好友,谈有关纳西文化的事情。

回到家里吃晚饭,与阿乃姆(老伴),谈到在外工作的儿子得表彰,报纸上都登出来了。自己把这则消息剪了珍藏起来。

至永胜



There have been times when a beautiful postcard, a moving film scene, or a nameless place in a jigsaw puzzle has roused my urge to travel. It was only after many years of extensive travelling that I came to appreciate something beside the scenery, the people. Honest and plain local people, or fellow travellers I ran into along the way, have become the most memorable part of my travels. Through them I learnt about the places I visited and even gained a new understanding of myself. This has been one of the most interesting and enlightening aspects of my travelling experiences.

The section of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route from Kunming to Dali and then Lijiang, seems to have an endless magnetic force, drawing people of different backgrounds from all over. They move from one stop to the next, enjoying their easy and carefree lives.

至
To Airpo

KUNMING

NAME: LIU JIANMING
 CLASS: 6
 ZH833
 DATE: 04MAR
 SEAT: 17A
 1440



This is the favorite place for backpackers to start their trips in western China, but I found this city neither appealing nor romantic. The Internet bars, cheap hostels, and travellers' hotels have little to praise about, and no wonder most travellers simply regard Kunming as a relay station to pass through as fast as possible.

I decided to stay here for a while, not because of the green lakes, the Stone Forest, the World Botanical Park or the Creative Art Studio, but because of a particularly warm-hearted woman who has made a great impression on many wandering travellers.

WARM-HEARTED MAMA FU

Having nothing better to do one April evening in 1999, I wandered into a Western restaurant with a rather unique name — “Mama Fu’s Café”. It was the first time I met the owner, and found out how she earned her reputation.

Serving Western Food with Love

My family name is Fu — foreigners added the term Mama.” Mama Fu is a perfect native of Kunming. Formerly a nurse, she opened her restaurant after retiring from her job at a hospital. She served only Chinese food at the beginning, but was often asked by foreign students studying in Kunming if she could cook them some Western food. Sensing the disappointment of these home-sick foreign kids, Mama Fu started to learn to prepare Western food from some cookery books and her Western cooking was a hit.

Apart from serving food to foreign students, she also care much for them, always lending a help hand. Her maternal spirit moved many foreign students, and they began to call her “Mama Fu”.

Love and Care

During the trip when I first got to know Mama Fu, I also became acquainted in Lijiang with a lonely Japanese traveller by the name of Takako Ohayashi. We stayed in the same hotel and

spent three happy days together. I left for Kunming several days earlier than she did, but we exchanged mailing addresses before we parted.

Unfortunately, she caught a cold and had to give up her plan to travel to Shangri-La. Instead she went back to Kunming, where she went to Mama Fu’s restaurant just as I had.

Later, she told Mama Fu she did not feel well, whom immediately stopped everything she was doing and took her straight to the hospital. Showing no signs of improvement several days later, Ohayashi had to hook up to an intravenous drip for three days. Every day, Mama Fu went to the hospital to



The writer is reunited with Mama Fu in Lijiang



Japanese Tourist (second from right) with Mama Fu's family after her recovery



Mama Fu's latest noodle shop





Mama Fu (left) and her younger sister

visit her and bring her home-made Japanese food until she was discharged.

Jumping Somersaults of Gratitude

In 2001, after traveling along the Yunnan-Tibetan route for more than a month, I came to my final stop in Kunming and went to visit Mama Fu again. She told me an interesting story. "A couple of years ago, several foreign tourists wanted to go to Tibet from Yunnan. They waited for their opportunity in

Lijiang. At the time, I had just opened an outlet of my restaurant there. I found them after they had been waiting there for several months, spending almost all their money. They all left for home with only one British tourist named Peter staying behind. He lived frugally to save money and waited for the chance to get into Tibet. At last we helped him to go to Tibet. When Peter returned to Lijiang, he did acrobatics everyday outside my restaurant as his particular way to thank those who had helped him."

Communicating with Her Heart

Mama Fu's reputation as a loving helper has spread among backpackers. A decade ago, a traffic accident took place in Lijiang when an American cyclist was struck down by a motorcycle and was seriously injured. The victim's girlfriend spoke no Chinese and could not communicate with the local people; fortunately, some foreign tourists ran to Mama Fu's restaurant to seek help. Formerly a nurse, Mama Fu dropped her work and hurried to help. Even though the injured man did not survive the accident, but his relatives and other foreigners there were very grateful to Mama Fu.

Yunnan rice vermicelli



The exquisitely decorated Aome-Meili Restaurant



Lijiang branch of the Mama Fu restaurant



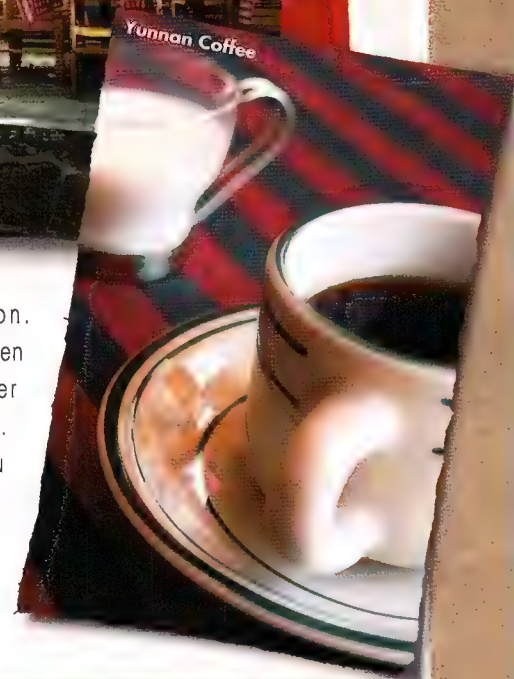
Lijiang Rice Cake

Solving Riddles for Tour Guides

In Lijiang, Mama Fu is not only an ambassador of goodwill for foreign backpackers, but also a good helper for local travellers as well. Once a French photographer hired a local guide who was too eager. He didn't leave enough personal space, and followed wherever the photographer went. Tension grew between the tourist and the guide, and it was Mama Fu who gave tips to the local guide

and eased the tension. Interestingly enough, even the French photographer thanked Mama Fu afterward.

Ironically, Mama Fu does not understand English. All these years, she has been communicating with foreigners with her heart.



Tracks of Mama Fu

Kunming — Here, Mama Fu runs several restaurants, namely Mama Fu's Cafe, Aoma Meili Restaurant and Mama Fu's Noodle Shop, all sited on Dongfeng East Road (opposite the Kunming Hotel). Two of the restaurants mainly feature Western food (pizza, spaghetti, coffee and beer) along with traditional Yunnan local delicacies. The prices are medium-range. The noodle shop provides a great variety of noodles such as spicy Mexican noodles, country noodles, and shredded meat noodles. The food is excellent and the prices are really good, starting from two yuan per serving. Naturally, the shop attracts not only tourists but also many locals. Please take note that the noodle shop does not use MSG on customer request, as a new service I suggested to Mama Fu. The interior design of all three restaurants is personally designed by Mama Fu and uses

entirely natural wood and dried flowers, permeated with the local rural atmosphere.

Lijiang — The restaurant is beautifully located on the riverbank along East Street inside the ancient town of Lijiang. It mainly serves Western food and traditional Yunnan delicacies. Prices are reasonable.

Tips: Mama Fu is not easy to find as she is always running errands for her various restaurants, making sure that her staff is friendly and courteous to customers. You will have to count on your luck to see her. One thing to note is that her younger sister looks exactly like her and people often take the sister for Mama Fu. The two sisters are equally kind and endearing, happy to provide customers with local travelling tips and news. I even have been told that some Singapore tourists had sought Mama Fu's opinion before planning to buy houses in Kunming after their retirement.

DALI

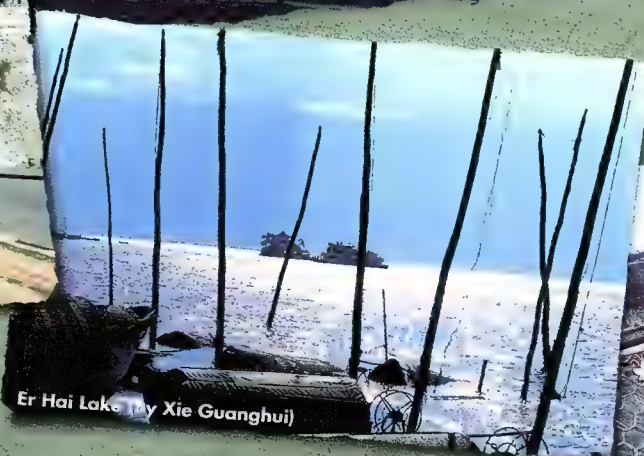
姓名: LIUFENGQUN 航班: 04MAR 目的地: 1440
 座位号: 17A 舱位: S 航班: ZH833
 日期: 04MAR 舱位: S 航班: ZH833



Looking to the Triple Pagodas of Dali from Cang Shan Mountain (by Xie Guanghui)



Dali ancient city



Er Hai Lake (by Xie Guanghui)



Bai lodging (by Peng Zhengge)

A major post station on the Ancient Tea Caravan Route, Dali is a starting point for tourists going west. Express bus leaving Kunming arrive in Dali in five hours, and it is another three hours to Lijiang.

The commercial and depressive feeling of Lijiang is absent here in Dali. All you see are relax tourists sitting at outdoor teahouses or café, reading novels and sunbathing, sometimes you would see the same tourists for several months or more.

THE LONESOME CAFÉ OWNER

— CHENG ZHIMING

I did not go into the Tibet Café by accident but went there with a mission — to try the Tibetan butter tea. I walked past a great range of dazzling bars and teahouses that are decorated with the latest style, and went straight to the oldest and most well known shop in town.



From Tibet to Yunnan

In 1986, Cheng Zhiming, the present manager of the café, came from the East Tibet Plateau to the hustling and bustling Dali on the plain of Yunnan. Penniless, he looked for business opportunities with boundless expectations for a better future. A new arrival in Dali, he worked as an apprentice in a blacksmith workshop. Later he went to work in a Chinese restaurant. Though he had to work extra-long hours under extremely harsh conditions, he mastered the art of cooking. Still later, he fell in love with a girl of the Bai clan, and eventually they got married and had a child.

Learning English from Foreigners

In 1987, Cheng Zhiming took charge of running the Tibet Café

opened by Mr. Nima, a Tibetan artist. For more than a decade, Cheng dedicated himself completely into his shop. Every pillar, every wall, every word on the menu, and every dish, whether in traditional Chinese, Western, Yunnan or Tibetan styles, speaks for his whole-hearted devotion. When asked how he learned to cook Western food, he smiled and told me that he learned from foreign customers. I asked him how he learned English. In an offhanded way, Cheng told me that he learned from foreigners first by hand gestures. I asked him if the increasing number of bars and restaurants on "Foreigners Street" had affected his business. He said the more restaurants, the more customers — as long as he could maintain the high standard of the food and service, he did not have to worry about not having enough business. No wonder the shop has been doing well for more than ten years under his management.

Roasted lamb chops



A Bottle of Thoroughly "Preserved" Bean Curd

The first evening I got to know Cheng, I went to his shop to try out their food. One dish, stewed pigeon, made me speechless. Cheng told me that the preserved bean curd used for the dish was his personal creation. It involved many processes and took eight years of preservation before it could be served! I could not believe it. "A big bottle of preserved bean curd in a grocery store is only several yuan, why do you go to so much trouble making it?" His earnest reply belied his wonderful nature. "Whatever I can make, I do



Foreigners love the food from The Tibetan Café

not buy from the store. This way, it ensures quality and hygiene standards. Besides, it meets my demands 100 percent."

Free Meals

Since I missed their shop specialty the night before, the following morning I went there again. I ordered a Western breakfast and a cup of butter tea. He prepared the tea for me and it was so authentic that it is fantastic. Seeing I was almost done with the food, he walked over and offered me a plate of his usual breakfast — thin Tibetan pancake. I tried a piece and did not particularly like it. He smiled gently and took it away.

When I tried to pay, he simply said that he did not take money from friends.

Barter Trade

On the following day, Cheng and his family invited me to have dinner with them that night. Looking forward to some home cooking, I accepted the invitation.

Unexpectedly I was delayed by work and they thought that I had forgotten about the dinner. So they decided not to wait. When I finally showed up, they were perplexed and prepared me a special meal of mutton, and a piece of chocolate cake. After the meal we chatted till night.



The first time the writer has paid with camellia



Chinese chafing dish

The Feeling of Being at Home

I visited the Tibet Café, as often as I could not because of the free meals, but for the feeling of being at home. When you're away from home, you run into all kinds of strange or interesting things everyday that you want to share with others.

People shared their views on their lives, work, culture and religions. When deeply locked into such conversation, I often completely forget my

position and have long talks with people like old buddies who have not seen each other for a long while, without the slightest trace of hindrance.



The Foreigners' Street is full of cafes

Comfortable setting of the Tibetan Café

Discovering Cheng Zhiming's Hospitality

Dali — The Tibet Café is located at 42 Huguo Road (at one end of "Foreigners Street") in the old district of the town. The shop serves breakfast, lunch, dinner and late night meals, featuring traditional Chinese, Western, Tibetan, Japanese and Bai food, including the "Three-round Tea", butter tea, beer and coffee. Prices are very reasonable, several yuan will be enough for a meal, and the food is authentic. Free Internet service is also available.

Shangri — La-A subsidiary of the Tibet Cafe stands on the Long March Road. The varieties and prices of the food are similar to the main cafe. The shop also offers tours to nature reserve villages. Tour guides take tourists, either in vehicles or on foot, to specified nature reserve villages to discover the true life of Tibetans. On the tour, tourists stay and eat in Tibetan homes.

Tips: According to Mrs. Cheng, her husband is a rather introverted person and seldom talks unreservedly with customers. If you want to have a chat with him, you will have to take it easy.

Tibetan decorations inside the restaurant

Diners can use the internet service for free

SAILING TO THE BLUE SKIES

— LIU XIAOFENG

There is a saying that if you want to know what is in a person's heart, just look at what books he or she reads.

When I travel, I always want to visit bookstores. Apart from looking for the most recent travel material, sometimes I can also find books suitable to read on the trip.

From Suzhou to Lijiang

Inside the Wuhua Bookstore, I was surprised to find a whole range of seemingly familiar reading material — travel books, culture and art books, philosophy and religious works, in both Chinese and English. There were even rare editions of music CDs.

When Liu Xiaofeng was an engineer in 1996, the German company in Suzhou he worked for wanted to build a hospital in Dali. Nobody in the company except Liu Xiaofeng wanted to work in Dali. He told me that he loved Yunnan and had been to Lijiang before. Unable to forget his excitement when he saw for the first time the blue skies over the Yunnan Plateau, a great contrast with the gray sky in Suzhou, he decided that Yunnan would be his home.

Having arrived in Dali, Liu Xiaofeng found the hospital project was dead because of bureaucracy. While in Dali, he had gotten to know a Bai girl who later became his girlfriend, and therefore he decided to stay.

Tired of Talking with Customers

At the beginning, he and his girl friend opened a restaurant in Lijiang. After the earthquake, the city became prosperous as investors and tourists poured in. The business in his restaurant was good but the

tranquility they were seeking disappeared, so they decided to go back to Dali.

On "Foreigners Street", they opened a café. "I really could not stand talking to customers about the same thing every night. I was really tired."

Several years later, he discovered what best suited his character and opened three bookstores, in Kunming, Lijiang and Dali.



Postcards full of local flavor



The Wuhua Bookstore is well lit and well patronized at night

Opening a Cultural Window

"To me, bookstores aren't just places where books are bought and sold. More importantly, they are cultural windows where people from different backgrounds can come and stay. The ancient history of Dali has drawn many scholars, Chinese and foreign, to come to study, and the books I have in my store meet their



The store offers a wide range of Chinese and foreign books

Liu Xiaofeng's Bookstores

Kunming-Minglin Bookstore: 9~10 B, 52 Wenhua Lane, Kunming

Dali Wuhua Bookstore: 285 Fuxing Road, Old District, Dali

Lijiang Wuhua Bookstore: 5 Cuiwen Section, Xinhua Street, Old District, Lijiang

All three bookstores offer shipping and handling to customers.

Tips: Liu, when not speaking, can seem very cold and hard to get along with. Once he is into a conversation though (depending on the topic), he now and then breaks into hearty laughter typical of foreigners. Those not knowing him may think that he is laughing because he is drunk. He is a person with a cool exterior but warm-hearted inside. To make friends with him, start with cultural topics.

needs. Naturally and gradually, the customers become my friends, from whom I have learned a lot."

"During the 1920s and 1930s a British scholar recorded life here with words and illustrations. Interestingly enough, while I was avidly reading his work in a café, a foreign woman approached me with great excitement. She told me she was the daughter of the author of the book I was reading. The coincidence amazed me. She had come specially to trace the origins of the book. Immediately I took her to the Bai Culture Research Institute, making suggestions and helping her to arrange an exhibition on her father and have the book translated into Chinese, so as to better preserve the history of that period."

An Episode in a Catholic Church

This is a place seldom visited by tourists but strongly recommended to me by Liu.

At the Weimen Entrance of the old district near Xinmin Road, the Dali Catholic Church was not easy to find. Even some of the local people could not tell me the exact place. The church, a structure combining Chinese and Western architectural styles built in the 1850s, had a Bai style entrance. The

exterior was complete with exquisitely built wood frame windows of materials from Jianchuan and in the style of Bai buildings. As a result, the nice combination offers a beautiful view highly appreciated by visitors. If it were not for the crosses at the top and on the iron gates, I could hardly have believed this was a Catholic building.

By the time I arrived at the place, it was already six in the evening and the door was closed. I went around the building to take pictures. When I entered the backyard, an old lady was having her dinner. I asked her if the church had been closed for the day, but she did not reply because she could not understand my accent. But she put down her bowl, searched for the key and enthusiastically took me into the church. As if she could read my mind, she showed me around inside and then stood in the front to pray, serving as a model for me to take pictures.

Before I left, she took me to the donation box at the entrance of the church. She did not want me to make a donation but to teach me how to sprinkle the sacred water and give me her blessing.



TRYING SOMETHING NEW — MR. AN WON HUN FROM KOREA

Hotels in Dali can be divided into three categories: a great number of Bai structures, quite a few artistic buildings and some ordinary looking houses.

GUEST HOUSE
韓國式 旅館

A Transformation by the Financial Storm

In the competitive hotel business in Dali, the Korean Hotel is perhaps the only one that refuses to go for extravagant style, and insists upon high quality services and hygienes.

In 1998, Mr. An Won Hun was a manager of a travel agency in the Republic of Korea. Confronted by near bankruptcy as a result of economic difficulties in Korea, he had to look for another career. He suddenly remembered Yunnan where he and his family once visited, and began to look for business opportunities there.

His family supported him to start his business in China and followed him to Kunming where they opened the first Korean restaurant, which was managed by his wife. His son is now studying Chinese in Kunming. After their business began to develop steadily, he went to Dali in 1999 and fell in love with this place of rich culture. Seeing other foreign businesses, he told himself that he should



Let waiters help you with
the Korean BBQ



There are many young Korean patrons



not miss his opportunity and so he opened a subsidiary of the Korean restaurant. He also built the hotel that he now manages. On weekends, he takes the evening train to be with his family in Kunming.

Fresh Start

Mr. An was surprised by my visit, saying that he had never given any thought to promote his business, because the best publicity was by word of mouth. I asked him what was the key to his success. He said that there was no trick, just persistently stick to some basic principles — clean environment, good hygienic standards and sincere service.

His restaurants and the hotel are interconnected, and they are very clean. The food tastes authentic and conforms absolutely to high hygiene standards. The service staff are all energetic young people who speak English. He has hired a woman manager, who is always

smiling, to operate the small restaurant, which has a staff of more than ten people. The high-quality management is worth praise, and although the prices are slightly higher, customers keep coming back. Mr. An said he was looking for a spot to open his third restaurant.

Successful Management

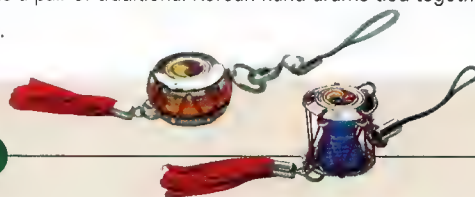
Mr. An emphasized that people were the most important assets of a business. He would not hesitate to offer high pay to draw capable employees. "The worst mistake is to sacrifice quality for money" is his motto. Though the conversation with him was short, he made his point clearly. Toward the end of my visit, he shouted as if he had suddenly remembered something. Without a word, he went back to his bedroom. Five minutes later, he came back sweating all over, holding in his hands a pair of traditional Korean hand drums tied together as a gift for me.

An Won Hun's Restaurants

Dali — The Korean Hotel and Korean Restaurant at 115 Huguo Road (at one end of the "Foreigners Street"), in the old district, are interconnected. There are double-bed and four-bed rooms. The lowest rate is 15 yuan with a public bathroom. The double room with bathroom costs 120 yuan. The hotel is complete with a self-service laundry room and clothing drying facilities. Most of the guests are young Koreans. The restaurant serves authentic Korean food — roast beef on a sizzling iron platter, rice cooked in the stone cooker and cold noodles. Prices per person vary from about 10 yuan to several dozen yuan.

Kunming — The restaurant under Mrs. An's management is at 177 Dongfeng West Road near the Jinsui Hotel.
Tips: Mr. An is a no-nonsense person and you are advised to talk to him in a practical attitude. In the evening he is busy with customers and the best time to meet him is in the morning when he is less busy.

Authentic and delicious Korean cuisine





FOREIGN KUNGFU STUDENTS

"Seeking no personal pleasure but wishing everybody happiness." These are the words on his business card, and the card owner is no ordinary person — Master Jingkong, abbot of Wuwei Temple of Dali.

Wuwei temple was formerly a post station of the Yuan army on their march to Yunnan from the north China pastureland centuries ago. Completed in 1410, the temple still houses a bronze bell cast in 1445.

Living with the Temple

Master Jingkong came from Qujing, also in Yunnan. The 31st generation of students of the Shaolin Temple, he started practicing Kungfu at a very young age, learning the skill from more than 20 masters. He also has a profound knowledge of Buddhism. When he first heard of Wuwei Temple, Master Jingkong realized that it was a place of extraordinary mountains, rivers and people. Just after

one visit, and he immediately decided to rebuild the temple at all cost. He tied his life to the temple.

Determined to Learn Kungfu

In 1986, the temple was completely rebuilt and Jingkong became the abbot, taking charge of running the place. Unexpectedly, Dali became a tourist destination, and foreigners began to troop in to learn kungfu.

He did not like the idea of teaching foreigners, until a foreign visitor changed his mind six years ago.

Foreign students learn from Kung Fu Masters



"He was very sincere and whenever I refused to teach him, he would come back the following day. He was here many times and my heart softened. So I told him he could not live in the temple, but had to come every morning and go down the hill in the evening to spend the night in the town of Dali. This is a test of his stamina. True to his promise, he came up everyday rain or shine. In the end, I made an exception for him and decided to teach him Kungfu. I want to help carry on traditional Chinese culture through physical exercises. Meanwhile I give those who do not understand Buddhism an opportunity to come inside the temple to personally feel the atmosphere of harmony. I do not need to discuss Buddhism, for its strong magnanimity speaks for itself. Many students shed tears when they leave. Some of them have written to me saying how they miss their lives at the temple. Still others come back bringing their friends." I know the master monk was speaking the truth, for the fame and reputation of the temple has been spreading far and wide, especially outside China, thanks to these visitors. For years there has been a steady stream of people who come to the temple to visit and learn Kungfu.

An Entirely Peaceful Life

While I was talking with the temple abbot, over a dozen foreign students and several young monks were practicing in the open. I counted and found six men and six women from

Europe. Though their movements were somewhat stiff, they were doing quite well.

"To study here needs at least a one-week stay or they won't get anything. To leave before then is a great pity. The person who has stayed here the longest is a German and he has been here for two years. Students come from all over the world, Israel, Canada, Europe, Southeast Asia and even Hong Kong. I can have over 20 people at max. They follow a fixed timetable consisting of two sections of exercises and two hours of cultural exchange that allows the students to share and learn from each other such as language, music, dance and even acrobatics. Before they go to bed at night, they have time to meditate. There is no electricity and when darkness falls, it is time to rest. There are three meals a day, entirely vegetarian. Each week there is a holiday of a day and a half. They go down the mountain Friday afternoon and came back Saturday afternoon. There have been no cases of breaking discipline in all these years."

I asked the Buddhist master: "Do you communicate with your students in English?" He told me that he understood no English. "Then how do you communicate with them?" He simply pointed at his heart.



Wuwei Temple built in the Ming Dynasty



Jingkong Master

Assistant demonstrating rolling of the Tai-chi stone ball



An Austrian student cleaning up her new residence



Warming Up

Lunchtime



The German student who has at the temple for two years



Dedicated foreign martial arts students



The Reformed Wanderer

At noon, Master Jingkong broke the conversation, stood up and struck the bronze bell. Then he invited me to the dining room to have lunch. Students still sweating from the exercises also came in to have their meal. They all greeted their teacher with a perfect "Master" in standard Mandarin. Eating on the same table with the master were several Kungfu teachers as well as Daxiong, the German who had been there for two years.

"Daxiong, I need your help." "No problem, Master." The tall German acted as if he were a small pupil, speaking Mandarin with a rather childish accent. "Daxiong, a very good friend of mine in the old district has a daughter who wants to learn English from a foreigner. Please go to his home Saturday evening to teach her, and then have dinner in his house. Ok?" Daxiong just kept on nodding his head.

"Master, I have to ask for leave next week to go to Kunming to meet a friend from Spain. The friend knows I am here and also wants to come and study Kungfu."

"A boyfriend or a girlfriend? Is she a girl you met before when you wandered from place to place?" I did not expect the Buddhist master to have such sense of humor.

A Life Hard to Find Elsewhere

When the master was not around, I asked Daxiong: "Do you like this place? How do you find your master?" Earnestly, Daxiong said: "I really enjoy living here and will continue to live here. The master is my mirror from whom I have come to

understand myself. The life here is hard to find elsewhere."

I visited their dormitory, a row of side rooms, built of wood. Inside each room there was nothing but beds, varying from just one to several. I saw no bathroom. Later I found out that the toilet was outside the temple, not convenient at all. However, I was sure that friends who came here did not come for the material comfort.

A 32-year-old Austrian, Michael, told me: "I am very interested in eastern physical exercises. Last year I heard about this place when I was in Guilin and here I am this year. I have been here for two weeks and will spend two more months. I like the feeling of waking up in a temple every morning. It is a great comfort to see green grass and flowers when I push open the window."

Lina, from Switzerland, knew nothing about Kungfu. Being in China for the first time, she came to the temple also because she had heard about it in Guilin. The story she had heard about the temple sounded very interesting and she had come to experience the place. Two young teaching assistants told me that it was a good place to learn about other places as they lived together with people of different backgrounds. What they have experienced here was much more informative than their classroom books.

Translated by F. Huang

Finding Abbot Jingkong

Wuwei Temple in Dali — At the foot of Lanfeng Peak of the Cangshan Mountains, northwest of the old district of Dali, the temple can be reached by bus for Eryuan. The ride is about ten minutes and the fare is 1.5 yuan. From the foot of the mountain, you have to climb about half an hour to reach the temple. An alternative is to take a taxi from the old district and go directly to the temple. The fare is 20 yuan and the ride is about 20 minutes. To learn Kungfu, one has to stay a minimum of one week. The daily charge for lodging and food is 50 yuan. The income is used to maintain and expand the temple. There is no limit on the age of students and there is no requirement for previous experience. Teachers will teach according to the situation of each student. Drinking and smoking are prohibited in the temple and men and women live in separate rooms. They follow a strict timetable. Visitors not wanting to learn Kungfu can tour the temple free of charge.

Tips: Master Jingkong does not meet people at random and keeps a low profile.



Antique copper bell from the Ming-Dynasty



Serenity within the temple



All-Vegetarian Banquet

姓名 LAUFENGQUN DEST KUNMING
 航班号 FLIGHT ZH833 舱位 CLASS S
 日期 DATE 04MAR 座位号 SEAT 17A
 登机时间 DD TIME 1440

LIJIANG

Bird's eye view of the Lijiang old town from Mufu Palace

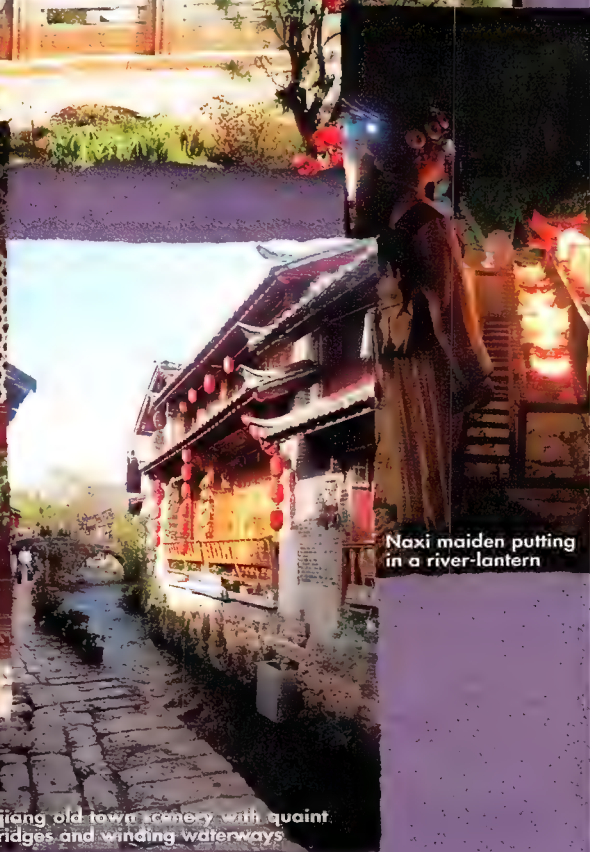


A Lijiang local residence



Don't ask me whether I like Dali, or Lijiang better. Dali suits the "lazy crowd" — who warm up reluctantly, while Lijiang draws the livelier mob, always on the go and on the lookout for something different.

But where Lijiang does win is its location, to the east is Lugu Lake, even Daocheng — go north and you'll hit the famed Shangri-La, and further is the mysterious Tibetan plateau. Any of these destinations would put a sparkle in the eyes of any respectable traveller.



Naxi maiden putting in a river-lantern

Lijiang old town scenery with quaint bridges and winding waterways



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站名 LIUFENGQUN
 姓名 Name 3U301

日期 Date 04APR
 舱位 Class 16C
 座位号 Seat 0715

舱位 Class G
 座位号 Seat 83

站名 3U301
 姓名 Name
 舱位 Class 16C
 座位号 Seat
 站名 SHENZHEN

AH DAN AND HIS "STRANGE AND WONDERFUL" SHOP

Ah Dan is one of the town's celebrities. Most people meet him at his "Strange and Wonderful" shop, and he is also often found at the bar across the street around the fireplace with the yarn-spinners, or else, at the Longmen Inn in the old town of Shuhe.

All Because of the Earthquake

Taiwan's "9.21 earthquake" turned many people's lives upside down, and Ah Dan was one of them.

Ah Dan's career includes working as a leather-smith, and a tourist souvenir designer with a penchant for making unique keepsakes from recycling old items. The business brought him lucrative profits, but the earthquake destroyed everything he had.

When he needed a fresh start, Ah Dan discovered the most pressing thing was not his business, but his family. In his former life as a workaholic businessman, there were constant business meetings and never enough time with his son and wife.

Reflecting upon all this, he thought of Lijiang, a fascinating rest stop for the travellers of the world, with pleasant weather and gorgeous scenery. The whole family moved to the old town and opened a souvenir shop, then a bar. It wasn't until everything was settled that Ah Dan remembered — Lijiang is also in an earthquake zone.

Friends from All Walks of Life

In his new life in Lijiang, Ah Dan is a collector of other wanderers. The old town's Square Street used to be a favorite spot for foreign buskers, but the response from the crowd was so overwhelming that they were told to move on. Therefore, the new gathering place became the area outside Ah Dan's shop. Ah Dan took over the bar across the street so there would be more room for the talented street artists, and gradually, the bar became a home for drifters and wanderers.

Ah Dan's bar is called "Grandpa Wang Shelang Wine Bar" and is

one of the hottest watering holes in the old town, every backpacker knows it. At around seven in the evening, the distinctive fireplace



Bells with unique design toll pleasantly

(apparently the only one in the old town) will light up and its inviting glow will soon draw all knowing travellers in town. The ambience is especially welcoming for solo backpackers; people feel cozy enough to say what is on their minds and share their experiences.

The owner of the Wuhua Bookstore whom I met in Dali, Liu Xiaofeng, also has a store in Lijiang, and it's right next to Ah Dan's store, but they had never met before. Luckily when I was



Old furniture collected by Ah Dan



Ah Dan exchanging ideas on organizing events with peers in Shuhe

chatting with Ah Dan, Liu Xiaofeng also turned up. The three of us carried a deep conversation and was later joined by some Shanghai girls we met from the bookshop. It was a night of endless tales and bottomless Pu-er Tea (house specialty).

Junk Collector's Dream

In Lijiang old town, Ah Dan collects "junk" with even more of a passion than he did in Taiwan. Used items in ordinary households of the old town are often treasures for Ah Dan. Even though the prices Ah Dan pay are ridiculously low, the folks still come to him — perhaps they feel that Ah Dan appreciates old things and would give their sentimental items a good home. So, Ah Dan's shop is filled with others' beloved things, and it creates a special mood of intimacy.

During our chats with Ah Dan, his wife and two daughters were playing near us, sometimes basking in the sun near the skylight. They seem to enjoy life here in Lijiang and Ah Dan said they had adapted quickly, and enjoyed the local pre-school.

Utopia in Shuhe

With more time on his hands and at less

"Strange and Wonderful" sells only Ah Dan's creations



Some of Ah Dan's masterpieces



Ah Dan inviting the writer to share

cost, Ah Dan could live life to his creative best. More than a year ago, he and a bunch of similar-minded people thought up a plan for the "Lijiang Pangu Commune". They chose the ancient town of Shuhe about 6 km away from Lijiang and called it the "Dream Factory".

The plan included preserving the culture of the 1000-year-old town, bringing back the traditional leather art, hiking expeditions, assisting children whose families couldn't afford their education, starting a second-hand shop, gathering all the wandering minstrels of the world to jam at the old town, encouraging other dreamers to rent housing, establishing a "life creation village" together...



Travellers gather around the fireplace at night

Tracks of Ah Dan

Lijiang — Ah Dan's "Strange and Wonderful" is a small shop selling unique souvenirs. It can be found near the archway of Kegong Fang in Lijiang old town (you can see the stone bridge from Square Street, it's just after the stone bridge). The products are the handiwork of Ah Dan and his wife, and the prices are worth its creativity and uniqueness. The "Grandpa Wang Shelang Wine Bar" across the street from the shop offers food and drink, best after lunch. The author arrived early once and interrupted Ah Dan's breakfast, but was invited and enjoyed a free meal. The best thing about the bar is the fireplace at night, where guests can join in the talk-fest at will. The specialty beverage here is the healthy Pu-erh tea.

Shuhe — Ah Dan has rented a few places in the town of Shuhe, the most eye-catching being the grain drying field at the entrance to the village. It is ideal for holding parties, the house next to it has a cafe upstairs (with "Dragon Gate Inn" characters). Ah Dan spends most of his time in Lijiang, but he says Lijiang is only a window that lets people know about Shuhe. (Note: Shuhe Old Town has housing to let, annual rent is about 3,000 yuan - each house has 8-12 rooms, details are available from Ah Dan).

Tips: Ah Dan knows just about everyone and immensely popular. If you have a question he'll have an answer. If visitors want to join special hiking groups, or visit Lugu Lake, Ah Dan is usually able to contact local friends.

姓名: LIUFENGQUN
 航班: FLIGHT ZH833
 日期: DATE 04MAR
 目的地: DEST KUNMING
 舱位: CLASS S
 座位号: SEAT 17A
 登机时间: BOARD TIME 1440

SHUHE

Shuhe (also called Longquan Cun or the village of Dragon Wells) is a collection of villages on the outskirts of the Lijiang old town's group of Ming and Qing Dynasty buildings. Both Shuhe and Lijiang old town are on the World Cultural Heritage List. Shuhe is a leather-working village once famous on the Chama Ancient Route of Northwest Yunnan. It also has its own Square Street, of ancient stone bridges, quaint old houses, narrow river waterways and the leisurely Naxi people.

Unlike Lijiang, the town is not overly commercialized, but has become a place for creative people from around the globe to realize their dreams, rising in prominence as an important travel stop.



Naxi women



The Longmen (Dragon-Gate) Inn



An antique shop



The tranquil old town of Shuhe

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"Ren Zi": LIVE WITH YOUR HEART

"Don't ask me where I'm from, my home is far from here; why do I wander?
For the birds soaring in the sky, for the streams running in the mountain, for the
olive tree of my dreams...my home is far from here." (Lyrics by Sanmao)

"Ren Zi" — Why Wander?

Everyone drifts for his or her own reasons. The "Ren Zi" association was founded in Taiwan 15 years ago. It is a private volunteer group, for people who like to drift from place to place, really getting to know a city or a town. Aside from Taiwan, cities covered in China include Shenzhen, Shanghai, Xiamen, Guiyang, and others. Participants like to meet like-minded people of different backgrounds, inspire an exchange of ideas, share knowledge and promote growth intellectually and emotionally. If you asked a member of "Ren Zi" why they drift, they would say: "Not out of discontent, or desperation; just to leave that which is familiar, and seek the far corners of the earth."

I discovered "Ren Zi" at one of their newest homes — the Ren Zi Life Gallery.

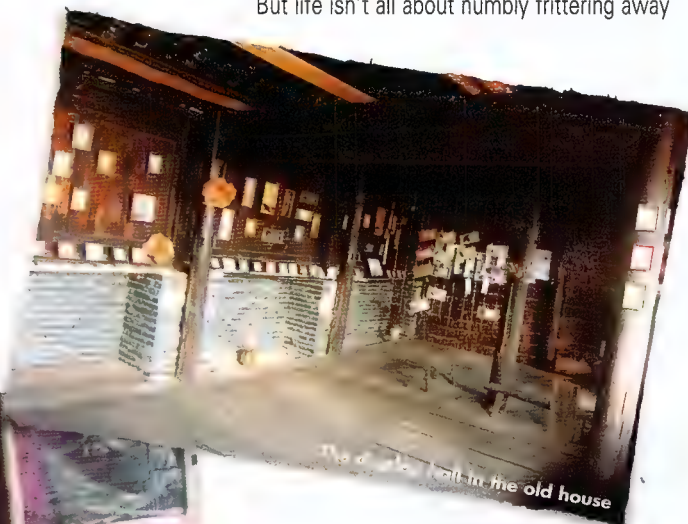
Sharing Life's Journey

Stepping into the "Ren Zi Life Gallery" is like entering a scene from a movie, the old-house style is a typical three-room compound building with a screen-wall called Zhaobi. Each door and window is intricately carved with patterns. Here you'll find ornaments that fetch steep prices in the city as antiques showing their true

function here. The spacious granary upstairs has been converted into a small exhibition hall, a few posies of dried flowers, and a couple of clay pots create a spare and elegant setting.

Two of the four young members of "Ren Zi" are from Taiwan, the other are from the Chinese mainland. The life gallery in Shuhe has just been set up, so they want to stay here a few years and enjoy life.

But life isn't all about numbly frittering away



the best years of one's youth without dreams, everyone need to find out for themselves. Too many of us have not had the time to delve into ourselves, and it is easy to lose directions in life. Many cannot find friends to grow and really share thoughts and idea with, but all of these precious things can be found in an environment like the "Ren Zi Life Gallery". "Ren Zi" doesn't offer religious preaching or exaggerated and pretentious slogans, just a bunch of people that you can grow with and build close friendships with, whatever path life may lead you on.





Songs that Speak from the Heart

As the other two members of "Ren Zi" were busy preparing dinner, Xiaofen and Meilan dedicated themselves to entertain me — the "unannounced guest". They took out their guitars and music and asked me to choose a song, from a thick book of lyrics containing songs about thoughts on the many flavours that life offers. Everyone can write their own songs. The titles included: "Drifting", "I have a dream", "This Road"...the singing of each song is an experience of sharing, among the lyricist, the player, the singer and the listener.

For someone who hardly ever sings, I nearly had a solo concert and they also took me to the "Words Expo" upstairs, a collection of life's inspirations that are expressed in different ways. For example, a picture made from dried flowers and shells, a simple bookmark, even an entire notebook that records the different sentiments of various people under all sorts of circumstances, in which there is no shortage of inspiring or amusing pieces of wisdom. Upon close inspection, I felt I could relate to each one. "The best role in life is to be a traveller; the best way to get to a destination is to



the fields of rape flowers in early spring



tending the fields with the landlord

hitchhike", "hell is not to imprison the damned, but to hold those without dreams", "experimental life offers beauty, competitive life gives fatigue"...

Why not a New Life?

"Ren Zi" sees harmony with the environment as highly important, so the home in Shuhe is rented from local villagers and they get on famously with their landlords, by doing farm work together in the paddies, sorting the garbage, and making organic mulch. They also ensure that folk arts live on by learning from the local elders. In their spare time, they get together with Ah Dan, the young owners of the Shihe Lodge, and retired Hong Kong couples, to plan meaningful activities. They take tourists to Lugu Lake so they can participate in raising funds for the local school, invite fabric-weaving artists from Lugu Lake to perform at the old village, even arrange for volunteers to teach for free. All of these are improving, not changing, the lives of the locals.

I resonance with the "Ren Zi" approach to life. As long as you have sufficient faith in Mother Nature, you'll come to realize that a person's basic wants are quite limited; food comes from the land, an inexhaustible source of fruits, grains and vegetables; shelter is to be found among the cheap farmhouses, and income can come from artistic creations made from life's inspirations. Then you'll have more time for bonding with friends and family, even with nature itself. It is such a simple solution to the common woes of urban dwellers.

Life is not all about the negative elements, such as unemployment, lay-offs, depression, fatigue, and loneliness. Anyone can choose a new life.

It's not that I'm sick of the material world, or that I've seen too much of real life; my heart holds true to one conviction, I believe dreams can be realized..." ("Ren Zi" song—"geese on the road")

Tracks of "Ren Zi"

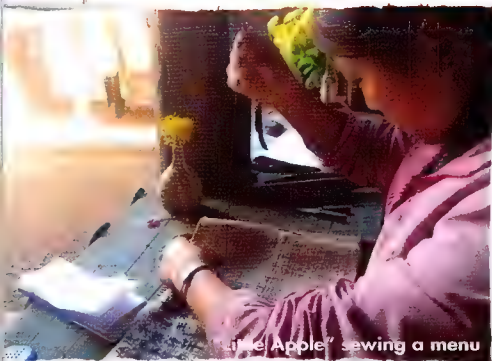
Lijiang old town — "Ren Zi" meets and visits friends in Old town's Square Street every week, follow your ears and you'll find them.

Shuhe — "Ren Zi" life gallery is not a tourist attraction but a place to meet with friends. It takes one to know one, if you take the time and have the intent you will meet them (just like I did), go with the flow and before too long, you'll be visiting them as family.

Taiwan — the 15-year old headquarters of the "Ren Zi Creative Life Development Association" are at No. 22, Jinshan Li Guanxi Town, Xinzhu County, Taiwan (Tel: 03-5478381)

Tips: Simply two words — honesty, sincerity

"LITTLE APPLE" — THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS



"Little Apple" is the happiest hotel employee I've ever met.

When I stepped into the elegant and tasteful "Shihe Lodge", the courtyard was empty except for a small black dog. I stepped

in quietly and took in the lovingly created ornaments and decorations. After what seemed to be a long time, I heard a young and girlish voice from behind me: "Feel free to browse around!" The young hotel staffer came down from the second floor at a

relaxed pace, all the while continuing her sewing.

I had no intention of staying there, but wanted to tour the rooms and bar. 'Little Apple' dropped her work and happily showed me around. I asked: "You have a deep attachment to this place, don't you?"

"Yes! This is my first job - I'm so lucky. All my friends want to work in town because they like the crowds and the noise, as well as the high pay. I don't want to stay in a place that crowded, I'd be so depressed. I like the natural environment, see for yourself how pretty the rape flowers are."

"My two bosses are young, they're even more fun-obsessed than I am. In the last couple of days there were no customers so we closed shop early and they took me mountain-climbing." "This place suits me, just about everything in the hotel was hand made, how can you be unhappy when your interest matches your work?"

It is truly fortunate when ordinary life meets extraordinary souls.

MR. LIANG AND MRS. LIANG — BACK TO THE BASICS

The Liangs are only in their forties but chose early retirement because they dislike the frenetic pace and intense pressures of Hong Kong. Mr. Liang used to be an air-conditioning mechanic, Mrs. Liang used to work at an organic farm. The couple used to be backpacker fanatics and they travelled just about every imaginable corner in mainland China. Retirement brought them to the mainland naturally, at first their instincts led them to Mianyang or Sichuan province, but after ten months they felt that the cold and wet climate made the winters rather harsh. It was at that time they visited Lijiang and found both the scenery and the climate more suitable, so they moved here.

In Lijiang, they live in Huangshan Town, which is a one-hour bike ride away to either Lijiang old town or Shuhe old town. Here in Huangshan Town, they live in a rented house with the landlord and another retiree from Taiwan,

everyone shares the central yard and each household has its own vegetable patch.

"Farming Fun" has become the greatest hobby for Mr. And Mrs. Liang, who are now experts of making vegetable oil, using dandelion to make a coffee substitute, salad, even cooling and refreshing tea. This lifestyle hardly costs anything. "Our monthly expenses amount to about 600 yuan."

Aside from volunteering in the village regularly, I asked them how they spend their days and got an enviable answer. "Rise at dawn, eat when hungry; watch the blue skies and fluffy clouds, enjoy the trees and flowers, live by the rural time schedule. Listen to birds chirp and cows moo, take pleasure in the wind's whispers and music of the rain, surf the net in the old town every week, hang out with friends, that's about it."

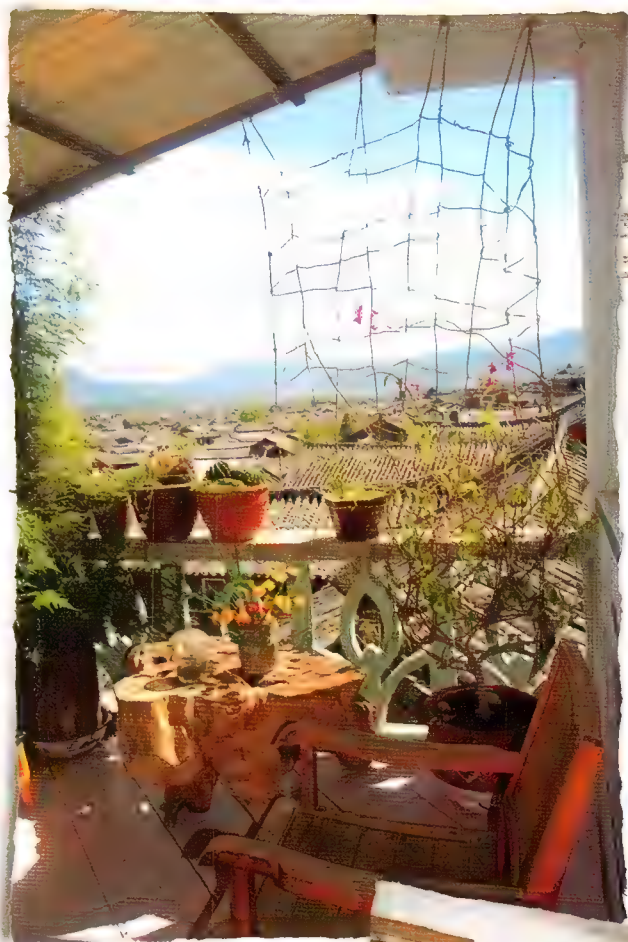


LIJANG LOCAL LODGING FILE

There are three options for staying in Lijiang:

1

Genuine Naxi local lodging: There aren't many within the old town. Converting one's home into hotels that meet various standards requires a sizeable investment and that is not very affordable. In fact, quite a few Naxi local lodgings are invested and run by people from other provinces. While the exterior remains the same, the interior and the service are far from authentic, so be prepared if you choose to stay at these places.



2

Naxi-style local lodging: Most accommodation in the old town belongs in this category. The layout is traditional Naxi housing — a three-room compound building with a screen-wall called Zhaobi, and a yard attached or square courtyards. It has good facilities and hygiene standards. While prices vary according to preference, but some may find the repetitive style off-putting.

3

New business hotels: Mostly on the outskirts of the old town, good facilities and services, more expensive but it lacks local elements.

UNBEATABLE VISTAS — LUYUAN INN

Discovering Luyuan Inn or the Deer Source Inn was a pure coincidence. In the lanes there are so many small hotels everywhere that I didn't know what to choose, but when I saw the friendly staff in local Naxi costume and the pictures of the inn posted on the door, the decision was made.

This is genuine Naxi local accommodation. The owners live inside and treat guests with genuine friendliness and helpfulness. Aside from the convenient location, there is variety in the type of accommodation, with cheap beds, and suites with bathrooms. But the best thing is that many rooms have balconies that boast a grand vista of the old town. There is also an internet cafe and a Naxi-style backyard, with very reasonable prices. Staying in different rooms at the Inn can be different experiences, and don't forget to taste authentic Naxi cuisine at the Inn.

Add: Lijiang Dayan Town (i.e. Lijiang old town) 67, Xinhua Jie, Shuangshi Duan
Tel: (888) 518 5178

Website: <http://deersourceinn.hypermart.net>

Room rates: standard rooms per bed (shared bathroom) 15-30 yuan; standard room (with bathroom) 50-150 yuan

Comment: The Inn offers great variety, and the rear of the building has a large balcony for hanging out, washing and resting.



ELEGANT AND DIFFERENT — THE SWISS SNOW INN

The Ruixue Inn or Swiss Snow Inn near the heart of the old town is one of those oasis spots in the middle of town, but it is easy to miss for it is hidden behind the souvenir stalls and fee-paying toilets. It has a fully renovated Naxi courtyard, and what it lacks in size it makes up for in petite perfection. There are antique pattern-carved doors and windows, as well as a small cobble-stone paved yard, rooms are decorated with much panache and have almost a Scandinavian cabin feel, attracting many foreign tourists.

Add: 34, Square Street, Xinyi, Lijiang Dayan Town

Tel / fax: (888) 518 4851

E-mail: swissnowinn@yahoo.com.cn

Room rates: standard room (shared bathroom) 120 yuan; standard room (with bathroom) 280 yuan, prices are negotiable in the off-peak season

Comment: The Swiss Snow has a small restaurant and bar, the bar has a cute fireplace, as well as free internet services for guests, and friendly service



A DIFFERENT WORLD — SQUARE STREET INN

The brand new traditional-style building is predominately white. Walk in the courtyard and you will be delighted by the bamboo bushes that add a graceful touch to the Yangtze delta garden. Rooms are modern and chic, and even though rates are double that of the other inns, but it worth every cent.

Add: Centre of Square Street, Lijiang Dayan Town

Tel: (888) 5111 1115

Room rates: single room 150 yuan (off-peak season); standard room 250 yuan; deluxe suite 350 yuan (all suites have bathrooms)

Comment: Great location, quiet amidst the center of town, with friendly service



ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION — SHIHE LODGE

Shihe Lodge doesn't fall into any of the above three categories. It is located in Longquan Village (also called Shuhe) about 6 km to the northwest of Lijiang old town. The famed Ming Dynasty explorer Xu Xiake once made a stop here. The lodge is an old-style house with antique appeal and situated in the most scenic site. From the rear you can gaze upon the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, and the entire village is encircled by water from the mountain. There is eye candy in the form of endless ripe flower fields. Staying at the lodge means you'll wake up to the chirping of birds, the sweet scent of flowers, and more often than not, rays of sunshine — it doesn't get much closer to nature than this. The lodge owners are young people from Kunming, and they are responsible for all decorations and food.



Add: in Longquan village
Room rates: Single room 30 yuan (with breakfast), peak season prices are higher, the lodge accommodates 20 people, public toilets



ENDLESS CHOICE:

Lijiang Yuan Inn (Naxi local lodging-suits families or backpackers)

Add: No. 22, Guanyuan Xiang, Guangyi Jie, Lijiang Dayan Town (next to the main entrance of Mufu Palace)

Tel: (888) 5120181 **Fax:** (888) 5124005

Website: www.lijiangyuan.com

Room rates: normal rooms (public bathroom) 60 yuan; single room (with bathroom) 180 yuan; standard room (with bathroom) 200 yuan; triple room (with

bathroom) 300 yuan, half price in off-peak season

Old Town Inn (luxury traditional-style accommodation-suits for families or business travelers)

Add: Jishan Xiang, Xinyi Jie, Lijiang Dayan Town

Tel: (888) 5189030 **Fax:** (888) 5189030

Room rates: normal rooms 200 yuan; single room 240 yuan; standard room 460 yuan; quadruple room 500 yuan, (all rooms have bathroom), 30% discount during off-peak season

Mufu Palace Hotel (luxury accommodation-suits for families or business travelers)

Add: Guangyi Jie, Lijiang Dayan Town

Tel: (888) 5102810

Room rates: normal rooms 180 yuan; standard room 650 yuan; deluxe rooms 998 yuan (all rooms have bathrooms), prices negotiable during off-peak season

Old Town Youth Hotel (Naxi-style accommodation-suits backpackers)

Add: Xinhua Jie (Shuiche Branch) or Guangyi Jie Zhongyi Xiang (Mufu Branch), Lijiang Dayan Town

Tel: (888) 5102339

E-mail: oldtowng_h@hotmail.com

Room rates: from beds to standard rooms (public bathroom) 15-50 yuan

Classical Music Inn (traditional inn that suits backpackers)

Add: First floor of the Naxi Classical Music Concert Hall, Lijiang Dayan Town

Room rates: Beds cost (public bathroom) 60 yuan

Tips: Guests staying at the hotel can enjoy a Naxi Classical Music Concert which starts at eight o'clock every night (admission is usually from 50 yuan)

Other Notes:

- After getting off at the Lijiang bus terminal, you'll be accosted by many locals sent by different inns and lodges. Unless it is peak season and there may be a room shortage, don't make decisions too early and it is best to check the location of the lodging first. The writer found that some of these places are either very far away or very difficult to get to, and worst of all, the room rates aren't exactly cheap.
- Old town is full of cobblestone streets that is not friendly to suitcases on castors. See whether your hotel provides luggage services. Ask to be met near the entrance of the old town when you make reservations.
- If you're going to stay more than two nights in the old town, why not try a few different hotels, if luggage is too much of a hassle, store the larger pieces of luggage at the first hotel, take a simple overnight bag to the subsequent lodgings, and don't miss the fun of staying in quarters that you won't find anywhere else.

TRAVEL TIPS

KUNMING, DALI, LIJIANG: ONE-LINE TOUR

This route is great for all seasons, because the climate is so mild. Peak seasons include Spring Festival, May 1 Labour Day and October 1 National Day holidays periods, and the summer holidays. That's when accommodation and transport are stretched, but other months are just as good for traveling here and not only can you avoid the hoi polloi, it's easier on the budget.

Below are suggested itineraries from the writer; readers are welcome to rearrange the activities according to personal preference.

(Note: transport cost doesn't include return airfares, accommodation is based on off-peak season tariffs)

Day 1: *Hong Kong/Shenzhen/Guangzhou → Kunming (Enjoy avant garde art at the Chuanku and Shonghe Galleries in the afternoon, or take a look in the Yunnan Provincial Museum; there are many restaurants along the Shuncheng Jie food street outside the museum. A variety of Muslim delicacies is also available, or simply wander over to Mama Fu's restaurant in the city center (stay in Kunming).

Daily expenditure (in town): Transport - ¥1 (half-hour bus ride from the airport to downtown); accommodation - ¥90 (Dongfeng Donglu Chahua or Camilia Hotel-standard room with bathroom); meals - ¥50 (lunch at Mama Fu's restaurant, dinner anywhere along Shuncheng Jie food street); admission - ¥0-5.

*Flights leave for Kunming from Hong Kong/Shenzhen/Guangzhou; airfares range from HK\$1,700 / ¥1030 (domestic airfares are often discounted to as much as 40% off; Hong Kong Travel Agencies can also purchase on tourists' behalf, make enquiries before you go).

Hong Kong China Travel Company Limited Phone: 2516 9228)

Day 2: Kunming Tours → Dali old town (leave in the morning, choose from: a: Western Mountains; b: Stone Forest; c: Jiuxiang Scenic Area; d: One of the four Anning Hot Springs) (sleep on the train).

Daily expenditure: transport-within ¥150 (a: at the No. 6 bus terminus you can take the No. 6 or No. 51 buses; special buses depart from the Zhongbei Bus Terminus; fares are ¥30 / 35; d: take the special bus from the city bus terminal. There are trains and buses from Kunming to Xiaguan of Dali that leave at night and arrive the next morning, change bus to go into the old town, (takes around 40 minutes); accommodation on train; meals-¥60 (lunch in the scenic area, dinner can be had at the Jixin Yuan Yunnan Cuisine Palace next to the Chahua or Camilia Hotel for ethnic performances and taste authentic Yunnan food); admission: a- ¥30 for all tourist attractions (extra ¥30 for return cable car ride); b- ¥55; c- ¥30; d-hot springs costs can vary from ¥10-¥80).

Day 3: It is suggested that visitors take the Dali Cang Shan Mountain-Er Hai Lake One Day Tour organized by travel agents (take the boat around Er Hai Lake, Xiao Puzao, Nanzhao Island, a three-course tea-ceremony can be enjoyed onboard; after lunch,

tour the Butterfly Springs, Zhoucheng, Triple Pagodas Temple and Dali old town). Stay in the old town and hang out on foreigners' street (stay overnight in the old town).

Daily expenditure: Tour cost- ¥171 (includes sea and land transport, admissions and lunch, old town travel agencies have many different tours to choose from); accommodation- ¥50 (as above); meals- ¥30 (have breakfast in the hotel, dinner along the old town's foreigners' street); admission free (included in cost of tour).

Day 4: Old town and Mt. Cangshan: Wenxian Pavilion → Wuhua Pavilion → Dali Museum → Dali Catholic Church → Foreigners' Street → Yu'er Park → Christian Church → Bei Cheng Pavilion → Cang Shan Mountain → old town (stay over in the old town). **Daily expenditure:** Transport- ¥50 (old town attractions can be visited on foot; you can also walk from the old town to the cable car stop, take the cable car up and walk down the mountain); accommodation- ¥30 (you can change to the Four Season Inn); meals- ¥40 (breakfast, lunch and dinner all within the old town); admission- ¥7.

Day 5 to Day 10: Dali old town → Wuwei Temple. Those with the interest and the time can study Kung Fu at Wuwei Temple and experience the life of sobriety and simplicity that monks lead. **Daily expenditure:** transport- ¥10 (old town has buses that go to Eryuan, get off after 7 minutes at the intersection of the Taiwan Village, it's a 35 minute walk to the temple in the mountain); food, accommodation and tuition-around ¥50 per day.

Day 5 or Day 11: Those not going to Wuwei Temple can set off for Lijiang directly on Day Five. Dali old town → Lijiang old town (visit on-foot Square Street, MuFu Palace, Sanyan Wells, specialty shops and restaurants in the morning and afternoon; enjoy Naxi Classical music at night); stay in Lijiang.

Daily expenditure: Transport- ¥50. Dali old town has tourist buses that go straight to the Lijiang terminus, the ride takes 3.5 hours, change to the bus to the old town, get off after two stations. Walking in the old town will suffice for transport. Accommodation- ¥50 (Luyuan Inn); meals- ¥40 (breakfast, lunch, dinner in the old town); admission- ¥85 (MuFu Palace- ¥35; plus Naxi Classical music Concert Ticket ¥50).

Day 6 or Day 12: Lijiang old town → Shuhe old town (keep discovering Lijiang old town in the morning; tour Shuhe old town from midday onwards); stay over in Shuhe. **Daily expenditure:** Transport- ¥12 (it is about a 10-minute taxi ride from Lijiang old town to Shuhe, more convenient than the return journey); accommodation- ¥30 (Spice Lodge); meals- ¥40 (breakfast in Lijiang, lunch & dinner in Shuhe); admission free.

Day 7 or Day 13: Shuhe old town → Lijiang old town outlying areas. Leave from Shuhe in the afternoon, enjoy the sights on the way: Baisha Murals, Yufeng Temple, etc.; enjoy the campfire party back at old town's Square Street, don't



forget to shoot the breeze with fellow travelers at Ah-Dan's bar.

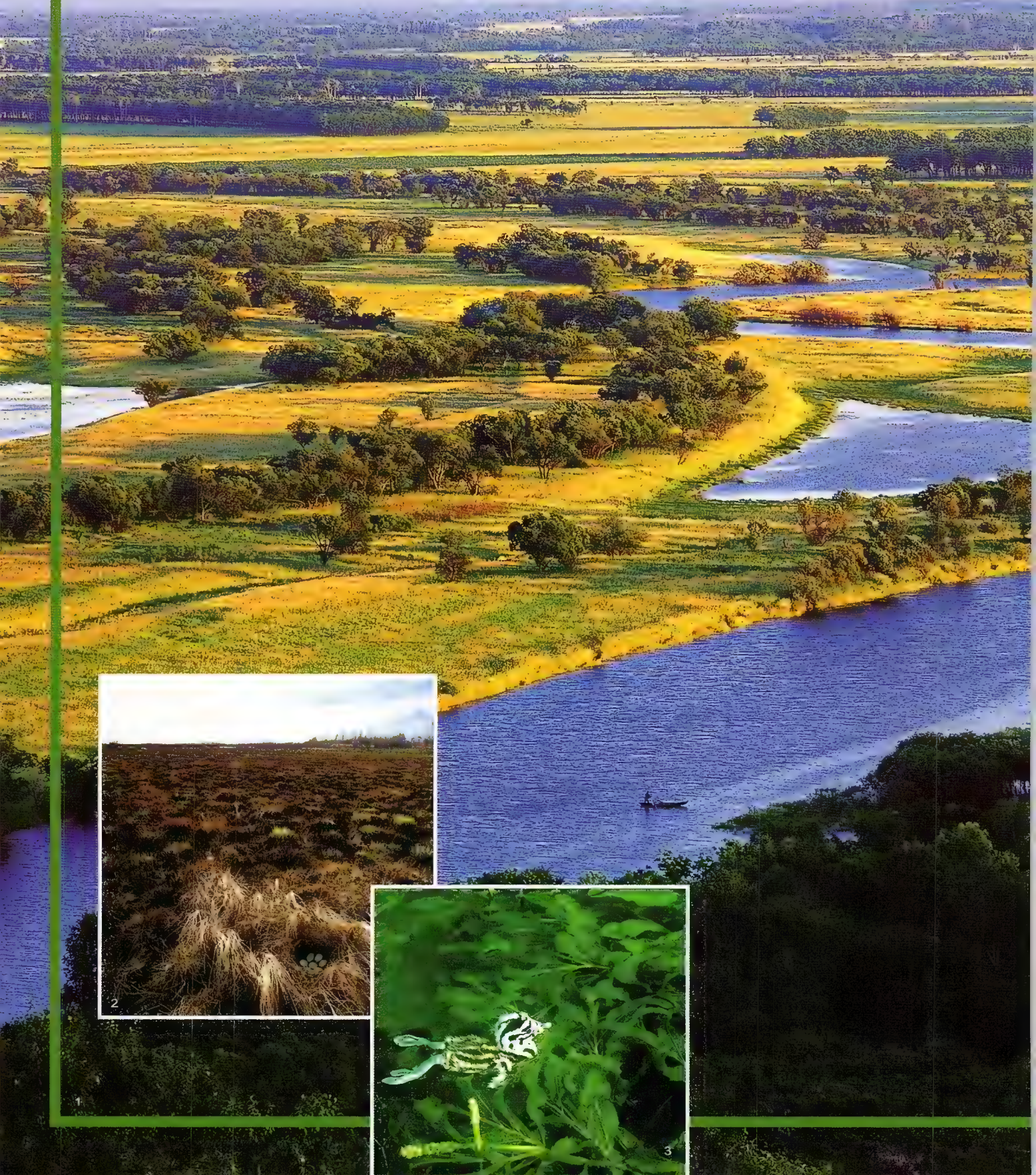
Daily expenditure: Transport-within ¥100 (negotiate a price with the taxi driver before heading off to the outskirts); accommodation- ¥60 (at the Swiss Snow Inn in Lijiang); food- ¥50 (breakfast and lunch in Shuhe, dinner back at the Lijiang old town); admission- ¥30.

Day 8 or Day 14 and thereafter: around Lijiang you'll find endless spots worth discovering—Yulong (Jade Dragon) Snowy Mountain, Tiger Leaping Gorge, Lugu Lake, Stone City. All of these attractions are covered by travel agencies, and especially for solo travelers, joining tour groups is easier and cheaper than finding your own transport, but tour times tend to be a little tighter. From Lijiang, to the east is Daocheng in Sichuan Province, and to the northwest you can reach the famed Shangri-La and even Tibet. But for the sake of brevity, those itineraries won't be listed here. (Reference: "China Travel" issue 244, 263 and "China Western Regions Travel").

Useful website: www.travelyunnan.com.cn (this webpage not only has comprehensive information on the tourist attractions and culture of Yunnan, most importantly it offers the latest transport information, such as flights, train and bus timetables)



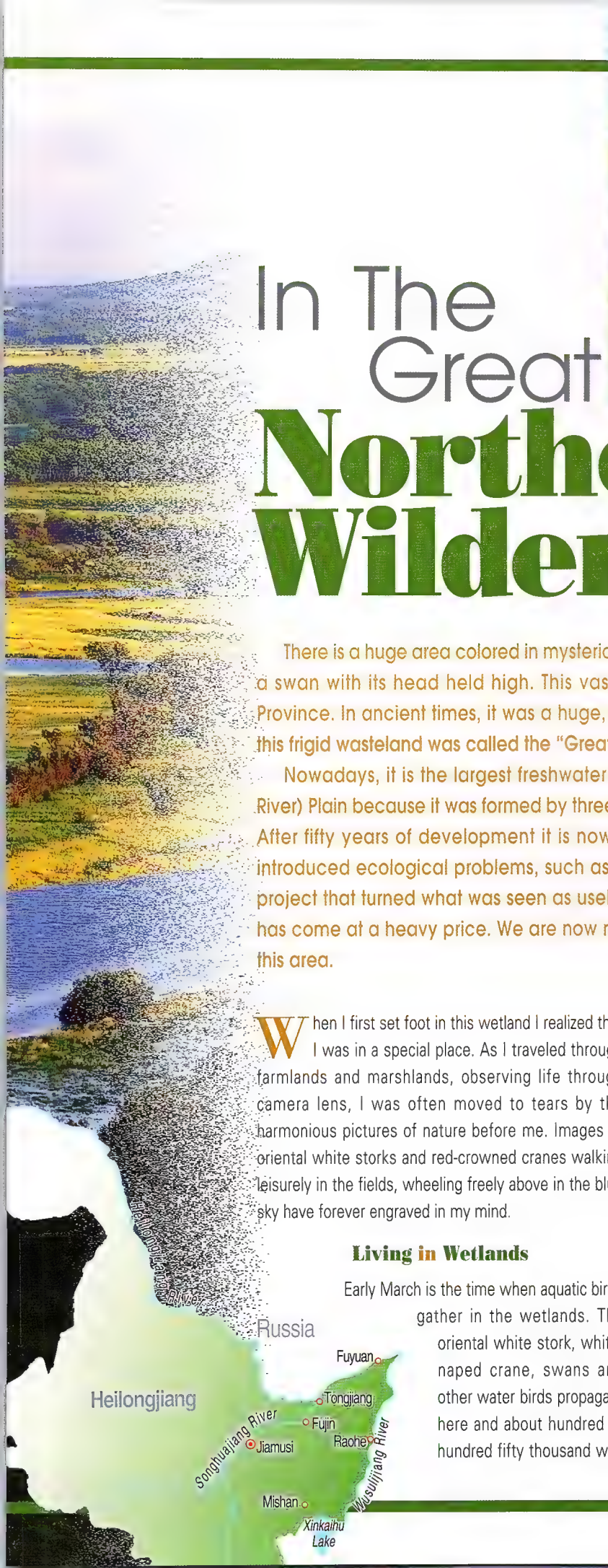
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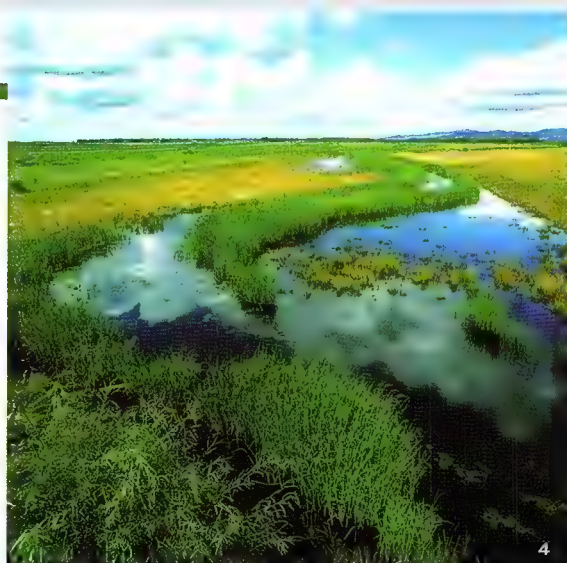
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In The Great Northern Wilderness



Photos and Article by Zhuang Yanping

There is a huge area colored in mysterious black on the map of China; it has the shape of a swan with its head held high. This vast wilderness of 5.4 million ha is in Heilongjiang Province. In ancient times, it was a huge, isolated marshland overgrown with weeds, and this frigid wasteland was called the "Great Northern Wilderness."

Nowadays, it is the largest freshwater marshland in China, known as Sanjiang (Three River) Plain because it was formed by three rivers — the Songhua, Heilong and Wusuli rivers. After fifty years of development it is now a fertile land, but the transformation has also introduced ecological problems, such as pesticide pollution and wetland reduction. The project that turned what was seen as useless wasteland into a profitable agricultural field has come at a heavy price. We are now reaping the bitter harvest for the development of this area.

When I first set foot in this wetland I realized that I was in a special place. As I traveled through farmlands and marshlands, observing life through camera lens, I was often moved to tears by the harmonious pictures of nature before me. Images of oriental white storks and red-crowned cranes walking leisurely in the fields, wheeling freely above in the blue sky have forever engraved in my mind.

Living in Wetlands

Early March is the time when aquatic birds gather in the wetlands. The oriental white stork, white-naped crane, swans and other water birds propagate here and about hundred to hundred fifty thousand wild

geese and ducks come to the north and stay here each year. Bean geese and swan geese gather in huge numbers, and of the duck family, mallard are the most common, followed by pintail, falcated teal, common teal, common pochard, tufted duck and goldeneye. In the summer, small lakes and streams join here and small boats shuttle back and forth in the reed marshes. Water lilies are in full blossom on the ponds and

1. The largest fresh water marshland in China is found in the vast expanse of the Sanjiang Plain. Zhenbao Island, where fighting occurred between China and the former Soviet Union in the 1970s. Now the Zhenbao Island Wetland Protection Zone has been established here. (Raohe River)
2. Wild duck eggs are common in the protected zones of the Sanjiang Plain area. (Honghe River)
3. Wetlands provides plentiful food for aquatic birds.
4. The wetland is drying out because of reclamation in the upper reaches. (Tongjiang River)

Heilongjiang

Russia

Fuyuan

Tongjiang

Fujin

Raohe

Mishan

Xinkaihu Lake

Songhua River

Wusuli River

various water plants grow well on the riverbanks. People can hear the singing of birds and see fish swimming freely in the limpid water.

If you squat down to look at the plants and animals carefully, you will realize that there are so many little creatures living in the wetland, and they all have the same right to the blue sky and the water as human beings.

Almost Sunk into the Marsh

In recent years I have been going to the wetland of the Sangjiang Plain each month on a kind of pilgrimage. However, visitors have to realize that wetland can be a harsh place as

well. Once I was careless and fell into the marsh. The mud and water soon reached my waist and I desperately tried to pull myself out using my tripod. But the marsh pulled me in even deeper the more I struggled. Luckily two herdsmen passed by, and they eventually hauled me out with a rope. As soon as I was out I fell down on the ground as if paralyzed. The herdsmen warned me of the dangers of the marsh. "You were lucky, but you have to be careful. You know this place is known as 'a big jar for making soybean paste'. If we had not come by, you would have been submerged in the mud of the marsh of the Sanjiang Plain."

Beside the accident, I will never forget my photography experiences on the Sanjiang Plain. In July last year, I went to Qixinghe River Natural Reserve. I saw a small boat through the reeds of the Xidapaozi Pond, and it disturbs the quiet home of the water birds. Birds were then scattered everywhere; some flew, other swam away. When we arrived at Xidapaoze Pond, a goshawk was circling overhead and the birds were chirping, inducing a quiet solemnity. On the river we saw a baby bird far away floating around looking for its mother. The hawk attacked several times, but the little bird barely escaped. My companions, from the



management committee of the Natural Reserve decided to rescue the bird and bring it back to the breeding center.

I also had my share of unpleasant experiences. In June last year, I stayed in a small village near a wetland. One night I heard frogs calling and went into the marsh barefooted. I found tens of thousands of small frogs jumping on the cracked riverbed. I dared not to move my feet because I was afraid of stepping on them. They were looking for water because the river had been pumped dry by farmers to irrigate their farmlands.

No more Chum Salmon

The chum salmon comes to the Wusuli River from the Pacific Ocean in autumn to spawn. The salmon are born in the river, grow up in the ocean and will die in their birthplace. After they are born, they are to go to the Pacific Ocean and live at north 35° latitude in the Sea of Ochotsk. Then they come back again to the mouth of the Mangniu River where it meets the Wusuli River, for spawning time around late September. On the way back they would eat nothing, but no rapids or shoals can stop them. Chum salmon only spawn once in their life, and only at the mouth of the Mangniu River, where there is less than one meter of water. The salmon die not long after giving birth, becoming food for water birds before they fly back to the south. And the newly hatched fries also eat the salmon meat as nourishment for their long swim to the Pacific Ocean.

In earlier years, I went to Zhuaji Town, Fuyuan, in September each year to take photos of people fishing for chum salmon. At that time, there were a lot of salmon and



every morning I stood at the bank to wait for the fishermen to return with their boats full of salmon. But in recent years, many fishermen may not catch a single salmon in the whole autumn season. This is the result of over-fishing and environmental pollution.

Rescued Oriental White Stork

In July last year, I met a girl, named Liu Xiaoling in Weiken Village, Tongjiang, holding an oriental white stork in her arms. She had found the stork in the grass of her farm in June while she and her mother were working in the field. They saw a bird with a

long beak and a wounded leg in the grass chirping, its eyes gazing pleadingly for help. The girl took the bird back home, dressed its wound and fed it with small fishes. Later on she found that the bird was an oriental white stork under first-class state protection, and there were less than 2,000 existing one in the whole world. In order to find food for the bird, Xiaoling's father got up early every morning to go fishing. As the bird's wound healed, it began to take a liking to Xiaoling, and it would follow her around when she returned home from school, swinging its wings and

chirping all the time. After two months the small stork grew to more than one meter in height and ate two to three kilogram of fishes every day. This problem troubled

1. The rare red-crowned crane is one of many bird species that congregate here in spring and autumn. Many birds congregate here, as the Sanjiang Plain area is a vital passage for migratory birds.
2. The grassy marshland in winter.
3. The Wusuli River located in the border area of China and Russia, is a well-protected island of forest wetland in the Sanjiang Plain area, with many rivers, large areas of wetland and various kinds of birds. (Raohe River)





Xiaoling's parents because they did not have enough money to buy fishes for the stork, and could not catch enough fishes as the weather became cool. They discussed the problem and finally decided that it was better to set the bird free. A ceremony was held for the bird and all the villagers came to say farewell. Xiaoling put the oriental white stork on the wetland gently

and the bird stretched her two-meter wings and flew into the blue sky. She first circled in the sky and then flew in the direction of Weiken Village. Xiaoling was surprised to see the bird in their courtyard when she went back home. From then on, the white stork would circle the village every morning and evening, and that is a really touching scene.

Urbanization Reduces Wetlands

In the early period of the development of the Sanjiang Plain, the thickness of the black soil was about 1.2m, but now it is only 0.2 to 0.3m thick, reducing by 0.1m each year. Because of the damage to local vegetation, natural disasters such as droughts, dust storms, floods and frost attack frequently. In 1998, the flooding of several rivers could be seen as nature's revenge for the random development of the wetland. I was among the 200,000 people fighting the big flood on the Songhua River, carrying sand bags to stop the leaks and building a dyke to hold back the floods in the teeming rain. At the time I did not know much about the wetland. I just remembered that there was a stretch of marshland in the place where we fought the flood during the 1960s and 1970s. I sometimes went to catch fish and shrimp together with some young friends and saw many birds there. But now the marshland is no longer there, and buildings have been built and crops planted in the past few years. So

Travel Tips

Jiamusi City

Accommodation : Hotels are common, divided into higher and lower classes, such as Nongkeng Mansion (three-star), Jiamusi Hotel, and Jiangtian Hotel. Rates range from 120~300 yuan per night. Hostels range in price between 20~30 yuan.

Transport : There are buses going to Tongjiang, Fuyuan or Qixinghe, located to the left of the railway station everyday (Jiamusi-Tongjiang: 40 yuan; Jiamusi-Fuyuan: daytime 60 yuan, night-time 90 yuan; Jiamusi-Qixinghe: 60 yuan).

Tongjiang

Accommodation : There are a few hostels located in Jiejinkou Township. The facilities are spartan but very tidy. Rate: 10~15 yuan/ person. People usually stay in the Tongjiang County Hotel after visiting the Hezhe Customs Garden in Nanshan, which opened to the public two years ago. Rate: 60~150 yuan/ room. Rate: 60~150 yuan/ room (with lavatory and hot-water bathroom).

Transport : There are two buses leaving from Tongjiang Highway Terminus to Fuyuan every morning. Fare: 60 yuan.

Dalijia Lake

Accommodation : There are a few tourist resorts around the lake in Nongjiang Town. Rate: 70~100 yuan/ person. These resorts provide all kinds of fish banquets and Northeast China dishes. Tourists without a local tour guide may need to stay in the Fuyuan County Seat.


Qixinghe Nature Reserve

Accommodation : Tourists can hire a vehicle from Jiamusi to Qixinghe (Seven Stars River). Time: 6 hours. Fare: 60 yuan.

Transport : Tourists are welcome to return and stay in the Changlinniao Farm Reception Hostel. Rate: 15 yuan/ person.



when there is a flood there is no place to discharge the water. Irrational development and abuses have led to a severe reduction of marshland, seriously damaging the natural water storage capacity on the Sanjiang Plain.

But things have changed gradually in recent years. More attention has been paid to protect endangered species and plants, and the reclamation of the marshland has been stopped. At the same time some cultivated land has reverted to its natural state. As a result the number of different kinds of animals has increased in this area. 

Translated by Wang Zengfen

1. On the Sanjiang Plain area wild grass and bushes are burnt in autumn every year by herdsmen or by people building roads, known in the area as "paohuang". (Fuyuan)
2. The Great Northern Wilderness has turned into the great northern granary, with a boundless area of fertile farmland, and wheat and soybean growing areas. But wetland in Sanjiang Plain area has reduced to 1.43 million ha from 5.4 million ha.
3. The marshlands in the Sanjiang Plain area abound with plants such as white gourd water lily, water caltrop, and duckweed.



Tasting the Bitter Fruit of "Battling Against the Earth"

The Sanjiang Plain is famous for its concentrated wetland and is also the largest fresh water marshland in China. Before the 19th century, this area was sparsely populated, and there were many marshes and lush green primeval forests.

Since 1949 the Sanjiang Plain area has experienced several upsurges in reclamation, in order to solve the grain shortage. "Battling against the earth" opened the first page of reclamation of the Great Northern Wilderness.

In 1957, about 100,000 PLA officials and soldiers went to conquer the Great Northern Wilderness. They opened up 230,500 ha of farmland. From 1969 to 1973 450,000 educated youth from Beijing, Shanghai, Heilongjiang and other places were sent to the Great Northern Wilderness. During that time, production and construction corps were established; however, there was little knowledge of farmland cultivation. Grain production was stressed and farmland capital construction was neglected. A lot of the trees were used to build houses or firewood, and as a result, the forest in that area suffered from great damage, forming a vast open country.

In 1988 the Sanjiang Plain area was transformed into an important base for commodity grain production, export agricultural products and side-line products, such as soy beans. By 1995 arable land had increased to 3.668 million ha while wetland reduced to less than 1.5 million ha.

Turning the Great Northern Wilderness into a great northern granary was hailed as a great agricultural project, but the ecological

damage has been a disaster.

Owing to the use of chemical fertilizer, polluted areas have increased gradually, and the discharge of agricultural and industrial pollutants have poisoned fish, birds and other animals to varying degrees. Secondary poisoning of carnivorous animals has become common, and the random felling of trees has sabotaged the forest ecological system. The treasured ginseng plant was almost wiped out, and many birds have moved further north because they could not find places to nest. It is inevitable that wild animals will decrease or even disappear altogether in the area. The current situation shows that the sable population cannot return to its former state, and increasing numbers of sika deer have gone to mountainous areas where they can find food or places to hide themselves, some even fleet, as far as the Sea of Japan. It is said that the Manchurian tiger, the leopard and other wild animals will disappear in the Sanjiang Plain area in the next five years.

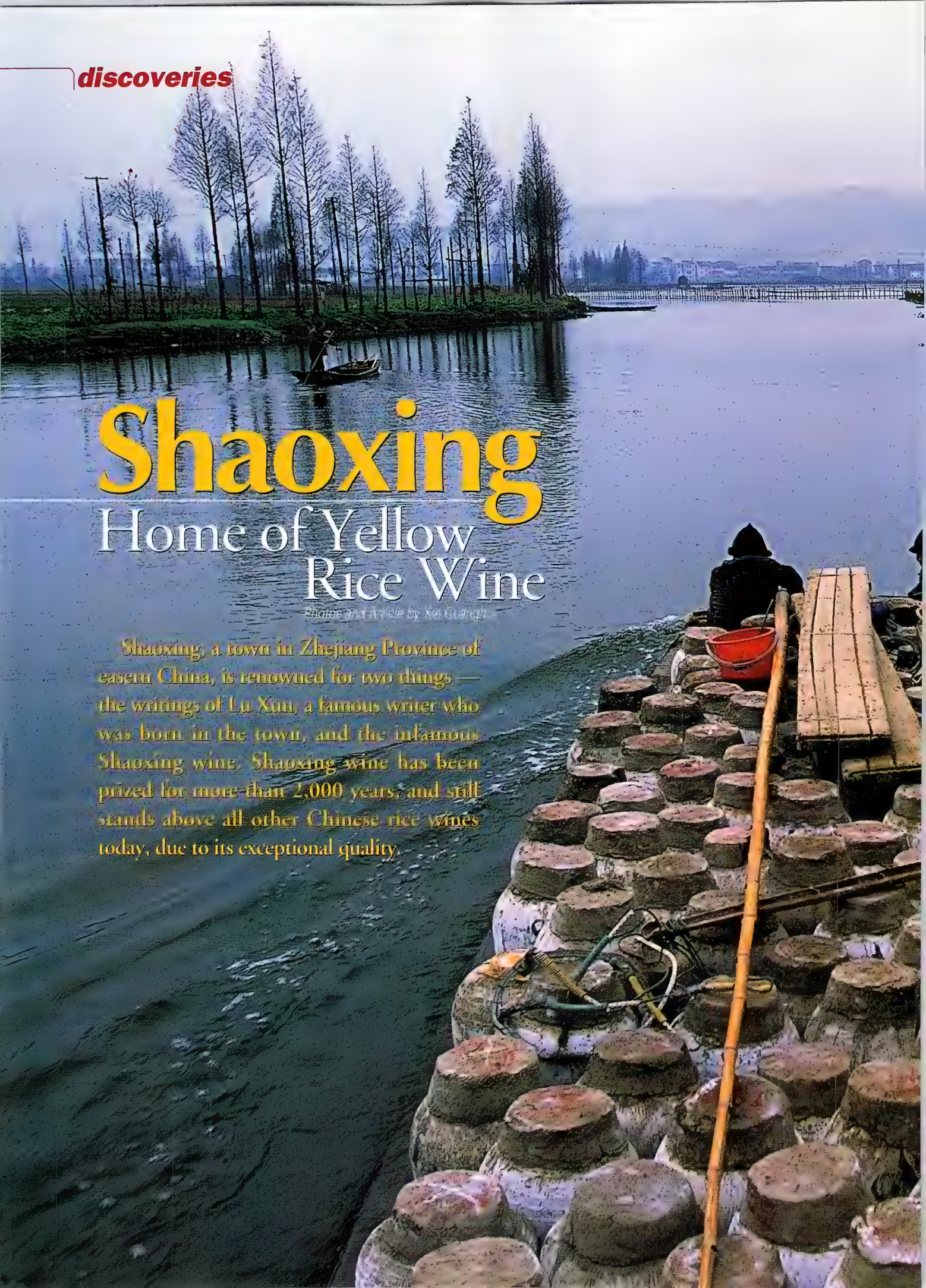
Following the increase in arable land, more than a hundred varieties of weeds have multiplied, increasing diseases in native plants and insect pest infestation. Windstorms often assail the area, causing heavy damage. People say that in some parts of the plain, windstorms were unknown before the 1960s, but now the technology is so accurate that it can report up to 7 cm of surface soil blown away each year. Wind erosion has reduced the fertility of the soil, and seriously eroded land accounts for 14 percent of the arable land in this area.

Shaoxing

Home of Yellow Rice Wine

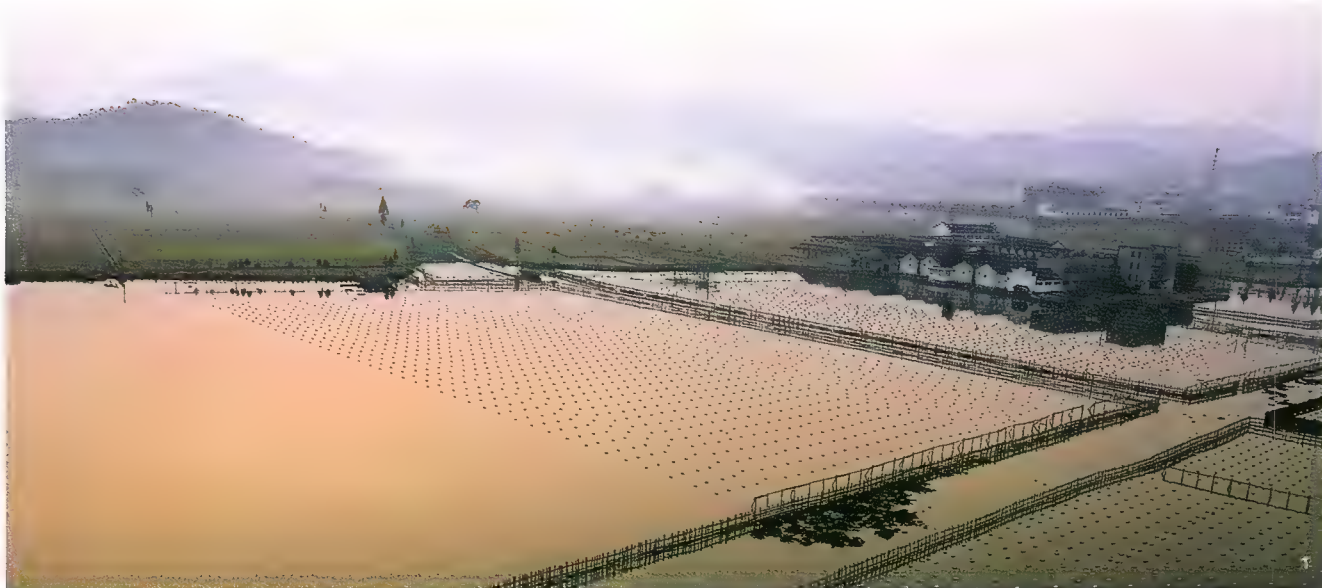
Photos and Article by Xia Guang

Shaoxing, a town in Zhejiang Province of eastern China, is renowned for two things — the writings of Lu Xun, a famous writer who was born in the town, and the infamous Shaoxing wine. Shaoxing wine has been prized for more than 2,000 years, and still stands above all other Chinese rice wines today, due to its exceptional quality.





Since yellow wine should not be shaken during transportation, it is both cheaper and more stable to transport on boats.



In the morning of early winter, there is a purple grayish mist drifting above Lake Jianhu, and the mist seems to carry a fragrant aroma along. That's right, the winter wine-making season has indeed arrived.

Long History of Shaoxin Wine

Ever since Shaoxing made its first bottle of wine as early as 492 B.C., people have been hooked for centuries after centuries.

Traditions die hard. The wineries in Shaoxing today are not much different from the past; their facilities as well as the wine-making process remains the same.

The winery workers are farmers from the surrounding areas, who came to work every winter and return to farming the next spring when the winemaking season ends. One told me his job was to spread the rice for jiafan wine. When the temperature reaches 65°C, another worker takes the thermometer from the rice and the two of them carry the bucket onto a handcart, which, steaming like a locomotive, crawls away. Once inside the fermenting workshop, the rice is dumped into a huge jar. Three strong men, each using an oar-like bar to stir the rice, and an old

man spreads distiller's yeast into the jar. The jar is then sealed with a woven straw lid. While rubbing his hands on the apron, the elderly worker told me that the yeast not only caused the rice to ferment but also created a fragrant aroma. There were more than 100 huge jars in the workshop and each could produce 300 kg of wine.



Keys to Good Brew-Smelling, Tasting and Touching

At the Tapai Winery on the lakeside, I saw 77-year-old Wang A'niu. Wang is from a winemaking family in Shaoxing and began learning the skills of winemaking from his father at 17. When he reached 19, he formally began his apprenticeship. A master is the foreman of a winery, known as a "wine master" by the locals. To perfect yellow rice wine, you need to rely on your personal experience, based on smell, taste and touch.

Kaiba, or "opening the rake", is the key process in wine making. A master's skill is mostly based on his experience. The sound of bubbling is heard about 10 days after the cooked rice is put in the jar. You put a hand into the jar, stir the rice and take out a handful to smell. Under normal conditions, the aroma of wine should be strong, which means the temperature inside the jar has reached 35-36°C. Then, using a wooden rake, you stir the rice thoroughly to let the temperature come down slowly. If the jar is opened too early, the wine will be immature and



sweet; if too late, it will be over-fermented and turn bitter. However, the masters seldom test the wine by tasting it. There are several hundred jars in the workshop and even if the master is a hardened drinker, he would inevitably get drunk by taking just one mouthful from each. The strange fact is that most master rice wine makers do not drink wine at all. A'niu dipped a finger into the wine and then licked it, knitting his eyebrows in concentration. He told me that in the past, the wine would often sour because of the hot weather. When that happened, they often added limestone water into the wine. The neutralized wine looked wonderful, but it made the drinker thirsty.

"Now, with temperature-control equipment," he said, "there is very little chance of having sour wine."

After 50~60 days' fermentation, the wine, a yellowish liquid, is separated from the dross that has fallen down to the bottom of the jar. This process is called zhajiu, or "pressing wine". Jianjiu, or "cooking wine" is the last step. The wine is heated to 90°C to kill the bacteria and keep the components stable. Again, the control of the temperature is vital. If too high, the quality of the wine would be affected. If the temperature is too low, harmful bacteria are allowed to thrive. For Master A'niu, the method worked yet again. "The boiling point of Yellow wine is lower than water," he said. "You watch the bubbles on the edge of the pot. When they decrease, the wine is close to boiling." During the visit, I also learned that there is no waste in the whole process. The dross can be used to distill spirits and the leftovers are good pig feed for farmers. People also use the dross to preserve food such as chicken and fish.

In the 1950s, A'niu became the first person to receive the title of



Wine-Evaluation Master honored by the government. Like many others, he does not drink. Drinking makes you too sleepy, he said, and can detract from the wine master's skills.

The Unmatchable Shaoxing Yellow Wine

Shaoxing wine is divided into four categories: Yuanhong (dry), Jiafan (semi dry), Xiangxue (sweet), and Shanniang (semi sweet). Yuanhong has the longest history. A kilogram of rice can produce two kilograms of wine.

Though computers have been widely used for analysis in winemaking, the hidden mystery of traditional Shaoxing wine making remains. Of the 20,000 tons of yellow wine China exports every year, 90 percent is from Shaoxing. Jianhu Lake water contains much more of the minerals molybdenum and strontium than other water, which helps promote biological reactions during the fermentation. This may be the



1. Shaoxing wine made of water from Lake Jianhu is particularly placid and smooth.
2. New jars cannot be used to hold brewed wine because they may have holes or other problems that may affect the wine's quality. Marking the new jars to make sure they won't be used for the finished product.
3. The huge steamer cooks the glutinous rice in just five minutes.
4. Spreading the cooked rice to cool it down, an important step before the fermentation.
5. The wine is heated and sterilized before being packed into jars.



key reason why the lake has become a winemaking base. A few years ago, some Japanese winemakers came to Shaoxing as tourists. They took photos while visiting the Dongpu Brewery and took some water from Jianhu Lake home with them. But strangely, the wine they later brewed was not as good as Shaoxing wine, either in taste or in aroma. In China, there are more than 70 winemaking enterprises scattered in Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Fujian, Guangdong and Shanghai, which use almost the same materials and recipes. Most hire skilled masters from Shaoxing, and some even transport water from Jianhu Lake. Still, none can make yellow wine as fragrant and mellow as Shaoxing wine.

Fresh wine tastes astringent and needs time to mellow. So wine prepared for export has mostly been stored for three to five years after fermentation. But the wine should not be kept in glass bottles, because once bottled, it lasts only 18 months. Kept in pottery jars, the wine improves with age because the permeability of the pottery promotes the growth of beneficial microbes. Traditionally, Shaoxing wine is packed in 25kg pottery jars with a short neck, big middle and narrow bottom.



Dongpu: Every Household Is a Brewery

The residents of Shaoxing call Dongpu the "Wine Pit", because every household in the town makes its own wine.

Country people use a very traditional formula to make their wine. They usually start 20 days later than the wineries. After the day marking the beginning of autumn, they mix wheat with water and let it ferment. The rice is harvested and husked before the frost falls. When the day of Small Snow arrives, they wash their jars, and soak and steam the rice. The cooked rice is spread in shallow bamboo baskets and showered with cold water. Then, after the wheat yeast is added, the rice is put into a small jar and pressed hard, with a hole the size of a fist dug in to the middle. Three or four days

later, when the rice has fermented, it is put into a much bigger jar. After water and more cooked rice is added, the jar is sealed and wrapped in straw to maintain the temperature. Then, after about a dozen days, when sounds of bubbling are heard, it is the time to invite the wine head to help "open the rake".

Shen Baizhou is the wine head of his village. A red-faced man in his 50s, he smelled like fermenting wine himself. He told me that since farmers make wine for their family, they usually do



1. Most tourists come to the Xianheng Wine Shop to try its yellow wine and preserved broad beans after visiting Lu Xun's former residence.
2. Soaking the rice is the first step in winemaking. Today, big stainless steel containers have replaced the traditional buckets used in the past.
3. The container is an important part of Shaoxing yellow wine. They have to be tried by being filled with semi-finished wine first.
4. Just when the sun comes out in the morning, workers transporting wine are already busy. A worker can carry about 500 jars of millet rice to the boat each day.



not boil it and some households even omit the pressing process. By putting a bamboo sifter into the jar, you can avoid the chaff. Some make it even simpler-you just push aside the rice when you take wine out of the jar. Shen is busiest around the day marking the start of winter (usually on December 22). Holding a thermometer, he visits households one by one to help open their wine jars. He said he makes 20 yuan for 50kg of rice. With a smile, he added, "It will be the year-end allowances for my grandchildren."

To distinguish homemade wine from the professional variety,

to draw auspicious pictures such as "Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea" and "Chang'e Flying to the Sun" on it. When Puyi, the last Qing-dynasty emperor, married in 1922, 40 jars of cellared wine were presented from Shaoxing.

Bathed in the golden rays of the setting sun, several workers are pouring wine into 25kg jars. When a jar is full, they cover the mouth with lotus leaves and bamboo shoot shells before sealing it with yellow clay. The hot wine sends out billows of heady aroma and the workers' faces are red, from inhaling the mellow vapours.

Tips for the Traveller

- ◆ **Brewery Tour :** Major yellow wine breweries in Shaoxing include the Shaoxing Brewery General Company (Guyue Longshan), Dongfeng Brewery (Huijishan) and Zhejiang Cereals Import and Export Company (Tapai), each with a recognized brand. The Shaoxing Dongfeng Brewery originated from the Yunji Xinji Brewery, which won the gold medal at the 1915 America and Pacific International Expo held in Panama. Shaoxing wine is mainly made in winter. To see the winemaking process, the visitor should contact a local brewery ahead of time. But be aware that photography is strictly forbidden during the tour of traditional winemaking facilities, to protect the nation's handicrafts.

Add: Shaoxing Dongfeng Brewery, Keqiao Ruanshe, Shaoxing;

Contact person: Ju Xin

Tel: (575) 8852913

To see how farmers brew their own wine, just go to Dongpu, the birthplace of Shaoxing yellow wine where every household knows about winemaking. The best time for such a visit is in the middle of December, when people start brewing their wine for the Chinese New Year.

- ◆ **Savoring Yellow Wine:** Yellow wine is brewed from rice, with yeast and other ingredients. It is usually 16~18 percent alcohol. It can be drunk cold, warm or at room temperature, according to the difference in season and temperature. Warm wine is usually for the cold winters when temperatures drop down below -10°C. You can warm your wine by putting it in a tube-like mug made of either tin, bronze or porcelain, which you dip into boiling water to heat until the wine reaches 40~45°C. Heated Shaoxing wine has a strong aroma. Sipping it carefully, your whole body will be warmed up. For a cold drink, you keep the wine in the refrigerator at a temperature of around 3°C. While drinking, you can

add ice to the glass and the icy wine will cool your brow in seconds. In spring and autumn, it is best to drink the wine at room temperature, which will let you enjoy its true taste. And the best dish to accompany the drink, is of course, the Big Gate crab.

- ◆ **Xianheng Wine Shop:** This is the best place to taste yellow wine in Shaoxing. In addition to Huadiao, Jiafan, and Yuanhong, the shop also serves Taidiao wine. Before ordering your dishes, you should read the menu on the wall first. After choosing your dishes - be it broad beans cooked with aniseed, fried bean curd, boiled peanuts, salt-water boiled shrimps or steamed dried fish - you should add up the prices and then go to the cashier's counter to buy tickets of the same value. The average cost of a meal is 25 yuan per person. A bowl of yellow wine costs 8 yuan; Xianheng's Eight Treasures, 20 yuan; duck stewed with soy sauce, 20 yuan; and bean curd, 6 yuan. A new wine shop, Cangqiao Old Street, is also a good place to try. While drinking yellow wine, tourists can see how Chunhuajiao wine is made.

- ◆ **Transport:** A medium-sized bus leaves the East Bus Station in Hangzhou for Shaoxing every 10 minutes. The journey is about half an hour and the fare is 10 yuan. To go to Dongpu, you get off at Gaoqiao, which costs 10 yuan. From there, you can take a pedicab for 2 yuan. Alternatively, take Bus No. 118 from the South Bus Station in Hangzhou, which will take 25 minutes and cost 2 yuan to Dongpu. The former residence of Xu Xilin in the town of Dongpu charges 5 yuan for entry.

- ◆ **Accommodation:** Dongpu Hotel Add: Dongpu Town, Shaoxing; Rate: 120 yuan/standard room; Shaoxing Jishan Hotel Add: 16 Qianwuci Qian, Shaoxing; Rate: 160 yuan/standard room; Tel: (575) 8063838.

on the way

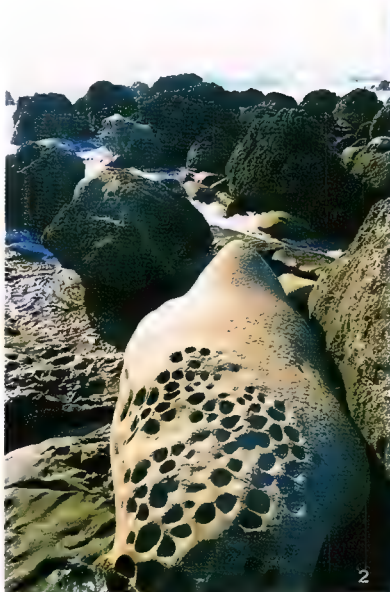


Hua-Tung Coast

The Last Virgin Land of Taiwan

Photos & Article by Chen Tianquan

Although Taiwan is generally thought of as a densely populated place, the intrepid tourist can still escape the noise and pollution of the big city to the more natural landscape. The Hua-Tung Coast in the east has been carved by eons of breaking waves, shaping a wonderland of natural landforms. Since the communications to the city are inconvenient, the resulted isolation has allowed the area to retain its primitive appearance, earning the title of the "Last Virgin Land of Taiwan".



The Hua-Tung Coast stretches from Hualien to Taitung, west to an endless range of coastal hills and east

outwards to the vast Pacific. This geographic location surrounded by hills and water has generated many beautiful vistas. Also, this is where the Eurasia Plate and Philippine Sea Plate converge, resulted in a unique landform that even the forgotten corners remains untouched. The 180 km Hua-Tung Coast is recognized as the most beautiful part of more than 1,000 km of Taiwan coastline.

Travelers can either join a guided tour setting out from Kaohsiung, Taitung or Hualien, or more conveniently, rent a car and travel independently.

Xiaoyeliu, a Primitive Lithosphere

Xiaoyeliu, literally Small Wild Willows, gets its name because of its resemblance to wild willow trees on the northern bank. This place is filled with spectacular craggy rocks, and its fantastic topographic views are formed by wind and waves gnawing away at the sandstone and shale. North of Xiaoyeliu is a vision of spectacular coastal landforms known as Sanxiantai, which is one of the best places to enjoy sea views. The name Sanxian refers to three huge rocks on a small island off the coast. Travelers can easily visit the island via an eight-arch bridge built over 10 years ago.

Since Sanxiantai is a lava landscape, you can enjoy its typical sea-corroded landscapes where cliffs, platforms, and caves abound around the island. Visitors will also see many rare coastal plants, such as date palms and magnolia. Looking outward to the shallow sea, there are beautiful coral reefs loom under the waves. This is a perfect place for the ecological and geological research tour.

A Beach Spa at Green Island

Green Island is visible on a fine day even from the southern coast of Hua-Tung. This island is isolated from the huge Pacific, and only an hour or so by ship from Fugang Port at Taitung. Green Island has experienced the same erosion forces on its northeast coast, where many fantastic rocks are formed. By contrast, the calm southwestern coast of Green Island is ideal for swimming or snorkeling on the coral reefs near the shore.

South east of the Green Island is an unusual seawater spring spa

1. Ocean waves and erosion have constantly transforming the seawater-corroded platforms, shaping them into the round pot-like caves.
2. The sandstone has a honeycomb-like appearance after long years of erosion.
3. The Eight-Arch Bridge connecting to Sanxiantai.
4. The Sunrise Spa on the seashore is one of the few seawater hot springs in the world.





known as "Sunrise Spa" (entrance fee NT\$330). Coming directly from the seafloor, the water is very salty. According to local tourist guides, seawater spas aren't very common, and there are only several places in the world that have such spas, like the one in Kyushu, Japan and Sicily in Italy.

The soda spring water is said to cure gout, and is a good skin exfoliant for those in search of a more youthful appearance. But for the benefits to show, it requires four or five baths, each time in pools of different temperatures. Just a word of caution, hot spa is unsuitable for people with chronic diseases such as hypertension, heart disease and diabetes.

Prehistoric Caves Ritual Sites for Buddhists and Taoists

The Hua-Tung coast is sparsely inhabited, but the people who lived here dated back as early as prehistoric times, and there are more than 20 important relics have been unearthed.

Archaeologists explain that prehistoric people moved to the remote eastern coast of Taiwan during the Ice Age, when human could walk across a land bridge from today's South China to Taiwan. Later, the Taiwan Strait appeared, separating the mainland from the island. Baxiandong (the Eight-Immortal Caves) facing the Pacific, was originally a cliff continuously gnawed by ocean waves. The wave action created a



dozen caves of different sizes, which became a natural home for prehistoric people. After the archaeologists finished their work and left, Buddhists and Taoists moved in, using some of the larger caves as ritual sites. Now more pilgrims than tourists visit the relic sites.

Beinan Minority

During the construction period of a new railway station in 1980, authorities found a Beinan cultural relic dating to Taiwan's New Stone Period over 3,000 years ago, and it is part of a complex of more than 2,000 tombs. Judging from the unearthed stone tools and decorative items, archaeologists learned that the Beinan people lived an agricultural life, with relatively



Travel Tips

Travel permit : Those born in Hong Kong or who have been to Taiwan after 1983 may apply for free entrance permission with their HKSAR Passports or BNOs. Travelers who do not meet these requirements will have to apply for entrance permission to Taiwan at the China Travel Agency, 3/F, Lippo Centre Tower 1, Admiralty, Hong Kong. Application fees: HK\$132. Inquiry no.: 2525 8316

Transport : A return air ticket from Hong Kong to Kaohsiung costs about HK \$1,000. Traveling time from Kaohsiung to Taitung by train is three hours, with prices ranging from NT\$280~364. Green Island is 33 km from Taitung, and takes 15 minutes by air one way. Tickets are NT\$1,128 one-way. The journey is 40~70 minutes by boat, and costs NT\$380.

Vehicle hire : One-day hire in Kaohsiung costs about NT\$1,600~3,000, depending on the type of car, and about NT\$1,500~2,000 for one day in Taitung. A two-day hire from Kaohsiung to Hua-Tung costs about NT\$2,600~4,000.

Weather : Summer is the best time to visit. Although warm in winter, the weather is greatly influenced by northeastern monsoons, so the ocean waves may be too heavy.


Accommodation : One of the good quality hotels in Taitung is Kangqiao Great Hotel (16 Lane 209, Part 1, Zhongxing Road, Taitung City. Rate: About NT\$2,000.

Currency : HK\$1:NT\$4.4

Taiwan Visitors Association Ltd. : Rm 904, Nan Fung Tower, 173 Des Voeux Road Central, Hong Kong. Service: 2581 9833



advanced workmanship, and their women wore many decorative items. The Beinan people are among the major native minorities in Taiwan today.

The ancestors of the present native Taiwanese spoke a language of the Austronesian family, and belonged to the Malay race. Some reached the eastern coast early, and those who stayed in the Hua-Tung area were mostly Amei people. Because of the long-term influences by the Chinese culture, their lives have assimilated to those of Han clan. Nowadays, one can appreciate the unique characteristics of their culture from their unique caves and traditional festivals. 

Translated by Huang Deyuan

1. Baxiandong is an archaeological site of the Changbin Culture, but is now filled with temples.
2. The landscape is spectacular along the Hua-Tung coast.
3. The Taiwan Prehistoric Cultural Museum in Taitung presents the life of the earliest people in Taiwan.
4. Snorkeling is a popular activity.
5. In the summer, passenger ships frequently shuttle between Taitung and Green Island (Iutao).
6. Bull's Head Hill is one of the spectacular forms that is shaped by eons of erosion.



Window of the World *For a Prosperous New Millennium*

Photos and Article by Huang Yanhong

After several quiet months, Shenzhen's tourism is taking off again. Window of the World, a popular theme park, has added new scenic spots and also created a new thematic program. The new show "New Millennium" presents the brilliant ancient civilization to audience.

Among more than a dozen of new scenic spots such as Colorado Exploration and Rafting, Fancy Pyramid, Alpines Indoor Ski Centre, Amazon Forest Trail, and Mount Fuji Digital Cinema, the most interesting one is the Jurassic Dinosaur World, where visitors can see almost a hundred lifelike dinosaurs of various species, such as pterosaurs, protoceratops, and saurischians in the primeval forest. When you meet these ancient animals, some would offer to test your weight and height, others would sell you dinosaur eggs that they have just "stolen". You can even ride on the back of an ornithischian to visit the park, and this won't be an experience you'd likely forget.

The 8,000m² Water World is a paradise of waves. Incorporating

the theme of the Columbus' explorative trips, it has man-made waves of 1.5 m high to let people know the hardship of a sea journey. At one section, visitors have to pass through a slide way of 10 m high and 25 m long under the "escort" of Indians armed with spears.

The most innovative attractions, of course, is the ski center. The first indoor panoramic ski center in China, it has snow of 40 cm thick.



Its ceiling is lit to imitate the clear blue sky and the surrounding scenes show snow-capped mountains and forests, creating a surreal experience. In this center, you can ride on a sleigh, ski board, or even huge bumping tire. It offers thrilling excitement that people in the south can rarely have.

New Millennium: A Story About Peace and War

The performance of the New Millennium begins at dusk.

This program has been staged for more than 1,300 times, and entertained as many as 3 million people.

This show is a total different version though, for its stage design is the most unusual. Looking from afar, it appears to be a huge golden ball, but in fact, it is the first full-view revolving stage in China.

The performance is first started with colourful lights and vibrating music, and then it comes the airplanes, train, and galloping horses. All of a sudden, an A-bomb explodes and destroys all these. A sweet voice of a little girl then sings in the dark, "Where are humans from, where are they going..."

After the prelude, the first scene "China in Antiquity" is based on the myth of Nuwa, a goddess who mended the broken sky. Then the stage would turn golden, as if the Yellow River water was rushing in. Afterward, a peaceful scenery is shown with a set of giant chime bells at the backdrop. This demonstrates the idea of "a world of rites and music" suggested by Confucius, the famous ancient Chinese thinker, philosopher and educator.

Unfortunately, a war is about to break the peace. Thirty ancient war vehicles run over the square. After fierce fights, everything quiets down and snowflakes drift down from the sky. The dusted figures of horses and warriors standing in the snow symbolize the unification of China by Emperor Qin Shihuang.

The second scene "Ancient Egypt" has a gorgeous Egyptian warship rises slowly from the middle of the audience seats, with the beautiful queen sitting at the bow, served by guards and maids.

The scene "Ancient Babylon" depicts the flourishing period of the Middle East, such as crowded markets and acrobatic shows.

"Ancient India" tells the story of Asoka preaching Buddhism. This performance features dancing Indian girls, monks in Kasaya, and monks of high ranks riding on a elephant.

1. The mini duplication of the Cologne Cathedral of Germany in Window of the World. (by Shi Baoxiu)
2. The scene of "Ancient Babylon" is colourful and entertaining.
3. Mask Dance in "China in Antiquity".
4. Figures of gallant soldiers and their horses in a snowstorm.
5. The mysterious Nile River, a scene from "Ancient Egypt".



The scene "Ancient Greece" focuses on the Olympic spirits. The torch burning on the coast of the Aegean Sea represents the longing for peace of human kind.



Translated by Gloria Shang

Tips

Admission: 120 yuan/person, after 7:40: 30 yuan/person

Opening time: 9 a.m.-10:30 p.m.

Transport: Take a tourist bus, Bus No. 101 or Minibus No. 473 at the terminus outside the Luohu Commercial Town. The journey takes 40 minutes; it costs 60 yuan to hire a taxi from the Luohu Railway Station.

Cost of ski: 80 yuan/person/hour (including a whole set of equipments); hire a coach: 50 yuan/person/hour.

An Autumn Trip to Kanas Lake

Photos by Li Xueliang & Zhong Weiguo Article by Zhong Weiguo

Xinjiang is known as one of the most beautiful places of China, encompassing a vast area and landscape that boast a special icy beauty.

For me, the most fascinating place is Altay Prefecture in the Altai Mountains, the most northern part of Xinjiang, abutting on Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russia. In there you can find Lake Kanas, recognized as the "Switzerland of China."





Before you enter the Kanas Scenic Region, you must get a border pass in Burqin County.

Burqin—a Quiet Border Town

Burqin County Town is rather small, with a population of only about 60,000 people. But the streets are wide and clean, and relatively devoid of traffic, pedestrian or vehicles, so the town is quiet and peaceful. Straight lines of tall trees, flowers and grass flank the street. Without any modern skyscrapers, the strong cultural features of the houses made us feel as if we were in a small town in Europe.

The scenery around Burqin County Town is very special as well. The Ertix River flows northward through to the Republic of Kazakhstan. Walking by the Ertix River, we saw the calm river flow slowly past the meadows into the woods. It was so charming, tranquil and relaxing that we seemed to be in a landscape painting of medieval Russia.

The fishes in the Ertix River are the most

delicious local food. Since average annual temperature is low, the fishes grow slower and get to stay in the clean river longer. That's why the fish tastes so delicious—something you should never miss in Burqin County.

Kanas—a Dreamy Lake

Lake Kanas is 140 km from Burqin County Town.

The renowned Kanas Scenic Region is located in the forests of the Altai Mountains. The best spot to visit Lake Kanas is the Fish-Viewing Pavilion. Standing on the elevated pavilion, the whole lake will come into view. The lake is like a huge mirror lying quietly amid the dense woods in the high mountains. The water is very peculiar—the green color is

tinted with pure blue, and the water changes with the season and climate; sometimes it turns deep blue, sometimes dark green or gray, dreamy and mysterious. When there are clouds in the sky, sunlight pierces through layers of clouds on the lake, and the reflections of light cause myriads of changes, making the lake all the more profound and mysterious.

Around Lake Kanas

When shepherds were attending sheep and cattle by the lake in the past, little sheep and calves drinking there were often pulled into the water and eaten by unknown animals—the legendary Lake Kanas Monster. Research later proved that the so-called Lake Kanas Monster is actually a big red fish whose body is as long as several meters. Many people see one while standing in Guanyuting (the Fish-Viewing Pavilion), but even after waiting a few hours, we never caught a glimpse of the "monster".

Yueliangwan (The Bay of the Moon) is the most beautiful spot in the Kanas Scenic Region. A pool of blue water lies calmly at the foot of the mountain amid lush trees, shaped just like a new crescent moon. The surface is very smooth, so the trees are reflected clearly, their green and yellow shadows making the Bay of the Moon even more colorful. We were all deeply moved by the charming, pure and tranquil lake.

1. Visiting Lake Kanas in autumn, you can see reflections of the snowy mountains in the lake (by Li Xueliang)
2. The silver birch trees look cold and lifeless (by Zhong Weiguo)
3. The houses in the border town of Burqin are unique (by Ma Xiyang)



Wolong wan(Crouching Dragon Bay) and Wucaiwan(Five-Color Bay) are also not to be missed. But my advice is to get up early and go to look at the mist in the morning on Yazehu(Duck Lake). Because of the big difference in temperature between day and night, and high humidity, there is often a layer of mist over the lake on autumn mornings, especially on Duck Lake, which is the most mysterious and beautiful. Water and trees around are all enveloped in a vast and hazy mist In the morning . A puff of morning breeze makes the cloud and mist float with the wind, leaving the trees and lake faintly discernable like a fairyland.

The Mongolians who live near Lake Kanas are known as the Tuwa people. They have kept their traditional tribal lifestyle, and their houses are built with logs. Most of the Tuwa people are shepherds, and they are not used to farming or doing business. With the development of tourism, many Tuwa people have leased out their houses for businessmen to manage as hotels, but they themselves go on herding in the mountains.

Visiting the Tuwa Village of Baihaba

Baihaba is a small village, 40 km away

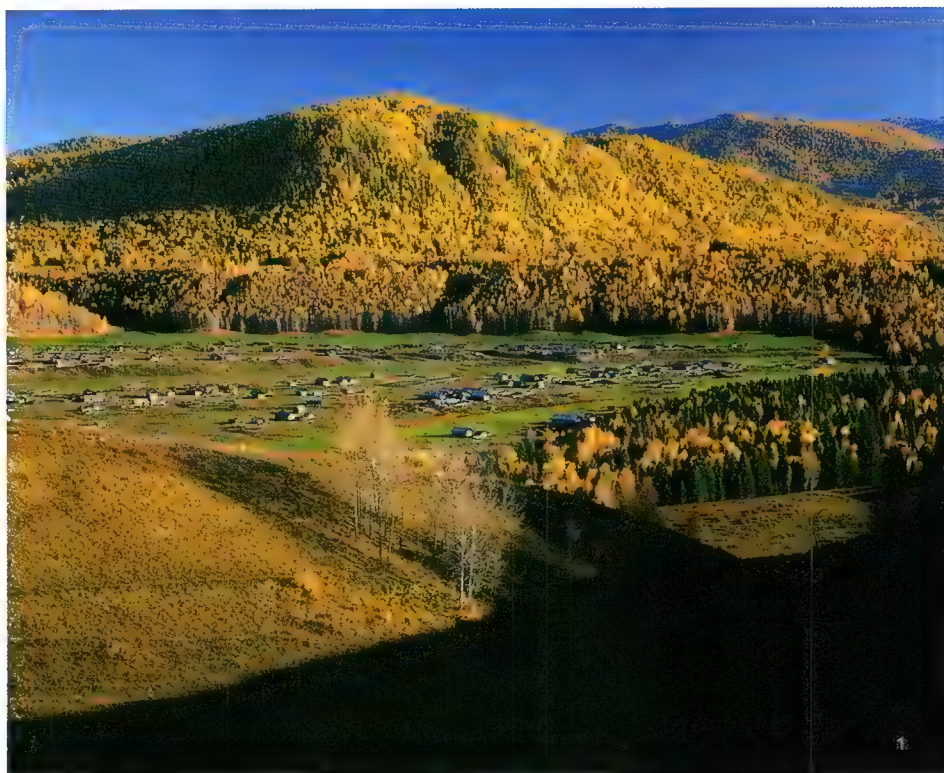
from Kanas Scenic Region. It has not yet been developed into a tourist area, so it can by no means be compared with the infamous Lake Kanas. It is situated less than 500 m from the frontier defense sentry, and the Republic of Kazakhstan is right across the Haba River.

This is a typical Tuwa village, comprised of some 100 households. All the houses are built

of wood, except one brick and tile building that serves as primary school. The Tuwa houses are built from big logs, and it makes a stable and warm home. In the northern region, winter is long and the climate cool. Snow can be as deep as two metres, so the roofs slope sharply to prevent the houses from collapsing under the weight. The houses have half open yards enclosed by wooden fences and the tall haystacks in the yard provide food for domestic animals in winter. Electricity is still not available, which means no electric wires or poles to bother photographers. With neither a telephone nor mobile phone reception, this is really a haven of peace. There are a few family hotels run by the Tuwa people in the village, with only basic furniture—a wide wooden bed big enough for a number of people, covered by thick woolen rag. The wood cabin let tourists experienced the life of the Tuwa people.

Fascinating Kom Township in Deep Autumn

Before I went to northern Xinjiang, a friend told me repeatedly that I should not miss Kom Township.



Kom Township is a Mongolian autonomous administrative township under Burqin County. It cannot be reached by bus, so we had to rent a car.

The township is located on a vast expanse of flat land, with the Kom River to its east and a small hill to its west, which is covered densely by silver birch trees. Most of the houses in this town are built of wood. We arrived to the landscape in late autumn, and all the silver birch trees were mostly bare, their white tree trunks standing densely together, looking cold and lifeless.

The next morning, we crossed the Kom River on horseback to a high slope to take pictures of the sunrise. Standing on the slope, we had a panoramic view of the whole town.

The houses, with their big courtyards, are scattered about but properly spaced from one another on the vast expanse of land. The Kom River looks like a jade ribbon drooping down from heaven. Lying quietly to the west of the town, it adds life to the town. When cooking smoke rises from the chimneys of the wooden houses, the town is enveloped in mist and smoke, a sight both magnificent and beautiful.



Translated by Yu Ling



1. The landscape of Kom in autumn (by Li Xueliang)
2. Lake Kanas has a special beauty when enveloped in mists and clouds (by Li Xueliang)
3. Smoke rises slowly from kitchen chimneys in Kom Township—home to the Tuwa community (by Zhong Weiguo)
4. The sheperds are moving the sheep to graze on more fertile grassland (by Zhong Weiguo)
5. When you take a bird's eye view of Lake Kanas in Guanyuting, the highest peak in the Altai Mountains, where four countries share a common boundary—the 4,374 m Friendship Peak—is visible at a distance (by Zhong Weiguo)



Travel Tips

Transport : From Urumqi to Burqin you can take the night bus of Huanzigou Bus. It's about 100 yuan from Burqin to Kanas Lake. You can charter a car to Kanas Lake (less about 1,500 yuan for 3 days and 1,800 to 2,000 yuan for 4 days).

The vehicles are not allowed to enter the Kanas Lake Scenic Spot, there are shuttle buses to both spots for free (only charges for parking).

Admission : 100 yuan / person

Accommodation : 30 yuan / p for tent, 200 yuan / p for a standard room, 120 yuan / p for a double room.

Food : 30 yuan / p

For local family

Hostel



Xingjiang
Uygur Aut.Reg.



Conquering the Heights **Chung Kin Man**

Photos provided by Chung Kin Man Article by Zhu Jie

In May this year, Hong Kong seemed like a scary place to be in, thanks to the SARS epidemic. But one Hong Kong man was doing something truly dangerous; he climbed to the top of the world, Qomolangma (Mt. Everest). Chung Kin Man, the founder of Hong Kong Mountaineering Training Center, was finally made to the top on his fifth attempt. What gave him the courage and determination to assail the heights once again, even though he had failed several times? What was on his mind as he struggled to the top?

Since a very young age, Chung has loved to climb mountains. One day, he read in a newspaper that a mountaineering training class was recruiting students. Out of curiosity, he registered, and after his first two efforts, he was hooked. He often competed with fellow students, and he was driven by the desire for competition, thus laying the foundation for a career in mountaineering.

The Mad Days in Europe

At 26, he went to study advertising design in Europe, but his interest in mountain climbing did not wane. With so many beautiful mountains to choose from, he became obsessed almost to the point of madness with mountaineering. He

admits that during his years in Europe, he was more interested in climbing than his studies.

"At the time, I was studying in Belgium. After school, I would work as a waiter in a restaurant to earn some pocket money. As I had no hobbies to spend the money on, I saved it. And then I would go to France to climb mountains during the holidays. For four to five years from 1976 to the early 1980s, I ascended some 30 to 40 mountain peaks."

Apart from blazing new heights and gathering more fieldwork experience, Chung also read a lot of books about mountaineering.

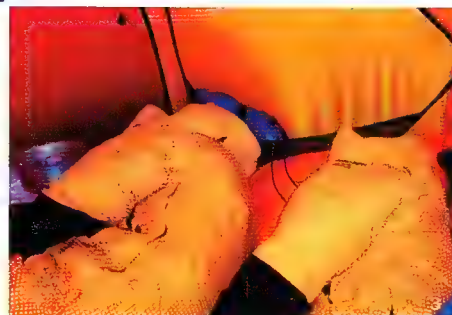
"Mountain climbing not only requires good physique, but also

knowledge, techniques and equipment, too.

"So every Sunday, I went to the Belgium Mountaineering Society to read books, including histories of mountain climbing, diaries of mountaineers, and books about equipment, geography and



1. Chung was on his way to the peak of Qomolangma.
2. At 8,300m after conquering the summit, Chung Kin Man (center) takes a rest with a British mountaineer (in red) and a Sherpa guide. This is the same British climber who would rather be late than endanger his life.
3. On high mountains, the temperature is low and sleeping bags are not warm enough. Mountaineers have to wear thick clothes even to sleep.
4. Looking down from the camp 7,500m above sea level, the slope is extremely steep. Behind the mountaineers is another peak, 7,543m above sea level.



astronomy.

"I read everything I could find there. I did not learn mountaineering from any teacher, I taught myself."

Four Failed Attempts

In 1997, Chung made a great plan — ascending the highest peak on each of the seven continents. One after another, he ascended Mt. Aconcagua in South America, Mt.

Mckinley in North America, Mt. Kilimajaro in Africa, Mt. Nansen in the Antarctic, Mt. Alps in Europe and Mt. Jaya in Oceania. But Mt. Qomolangma, the highest peak in Asia, and the world, at a height of 8,848.13m, refused to be conquered.

"Up to this year, I have tried to climb Mt. Qomolangma five times." Chung told me. His flat tone revealed a sense of surprising determination. In 1992, together with another outstanding mountaineer from Hong Kong, Chung tried to conquer the mountain from the southern route. But he used all his energy during the preparation period, and had to turn back at about 6,000m. His companion, Mr. Zhan, therefore became the first Hong Konger to climb Mt. Qomolangma. Chung admitted that he was very disappointed. In 1999, he started all over again, still following the same route. Just as they were about to make the final assault on the pinnacle, a fellow team member was suddenly reported missing. Chung himself had suffered from a bad stomach for five days. Consequently, he had to give up his second attempt. A year later, he tried from the northern route, but was stopped by a snowstorm that again blew away his hopes of conquering the mountain. Then in 2002, he tried again, but on reaching 7,000m, his spirits suddenly plummeted and he weakened. As he turned back, for the first time he toyed with the idea of giving up on Qomolangma entirely.

"Perhaps my body did not handle altitude sickness well. I felt very, very tired and missed home terribly. I did not have enough strength, nor enough will. Suddenly I was not in the mood at all.

"I knew it was very dangerous to continue the climb under such circumstances, because to fight nature, I needed not only physical strength, but stamina and a strong will as well.

"I did not learn mountaineering from any teacher, I taught myself."

"I had no choice but to go home. When I was leaving the camp at the foot of the mountain, I thought that I would never go back there.

"But people are very strange. After resting at home for a while, I wanted to plan for another trip."

Many people give up the idea after they have failed once or twice and it is rare to make a third or fourth attempt. What made Chung want to try the fifth time?

"To begin with, I have conquered six of the seven greatest peaks in the world. I found it very difficult to give up on the last one. Besides, I learned from past experiences and knew that I still had a chance. No matter how difficult it is, I wanted to try again.

"Take the attempt in 1999 for instance. If I had not suffered from a bad stomach, I actually had a very good chance of stepping onto the mountaintop.

"Last year, the Dutch team succeeded in ascending the mountain on May 31 and was the last team to do so that year. I knew from their experience that the weather in May is best for climbing. So I waited for my chance and finally I made my dream come true."

People say that where there is a will, there is a way. But in reality, careful reflection after the first four failures and patience were the key to his success.

Hell at the Height of 8,000 Meters

On his victorious return, Chung was greeted with warm congratulations, but the hardship and struggle he had endured were not easy for others to understand.

On the tall mountain where the air is thin, crises



are imminent and death may occur any time.

"Many people believe that mountaineers are not afraid of death, but if you ask me, I'll tell you — I am afraid."

Ascending Mt. Qomolangma is even more dangerous, because mountain sickness brought about by the high altitude may easily induce swelling of the brain and lungs leading

to instant death. At places higher than 8,000m above sea level, humans are pushing the limit of their existence.

"People describe the height of 8,000m as hell. This is very true. At 8,000m above sea level on both the northern and southern slopes of the Qomolangma, there are many dead bodies. On the northern slope, in particular, over a hundred people have died.

"This is because mountaineers have to spend a night there, and the longer they spend there, the more likely for them to run into accidents."

"During my trip there in 2002, I developed symptoms similar to encephaledema and signs of blocked blood veins in both feet. I became afraid and the doctor could not tell what the cause was. Fortunately, later I found out that the problem was caused by my boots.

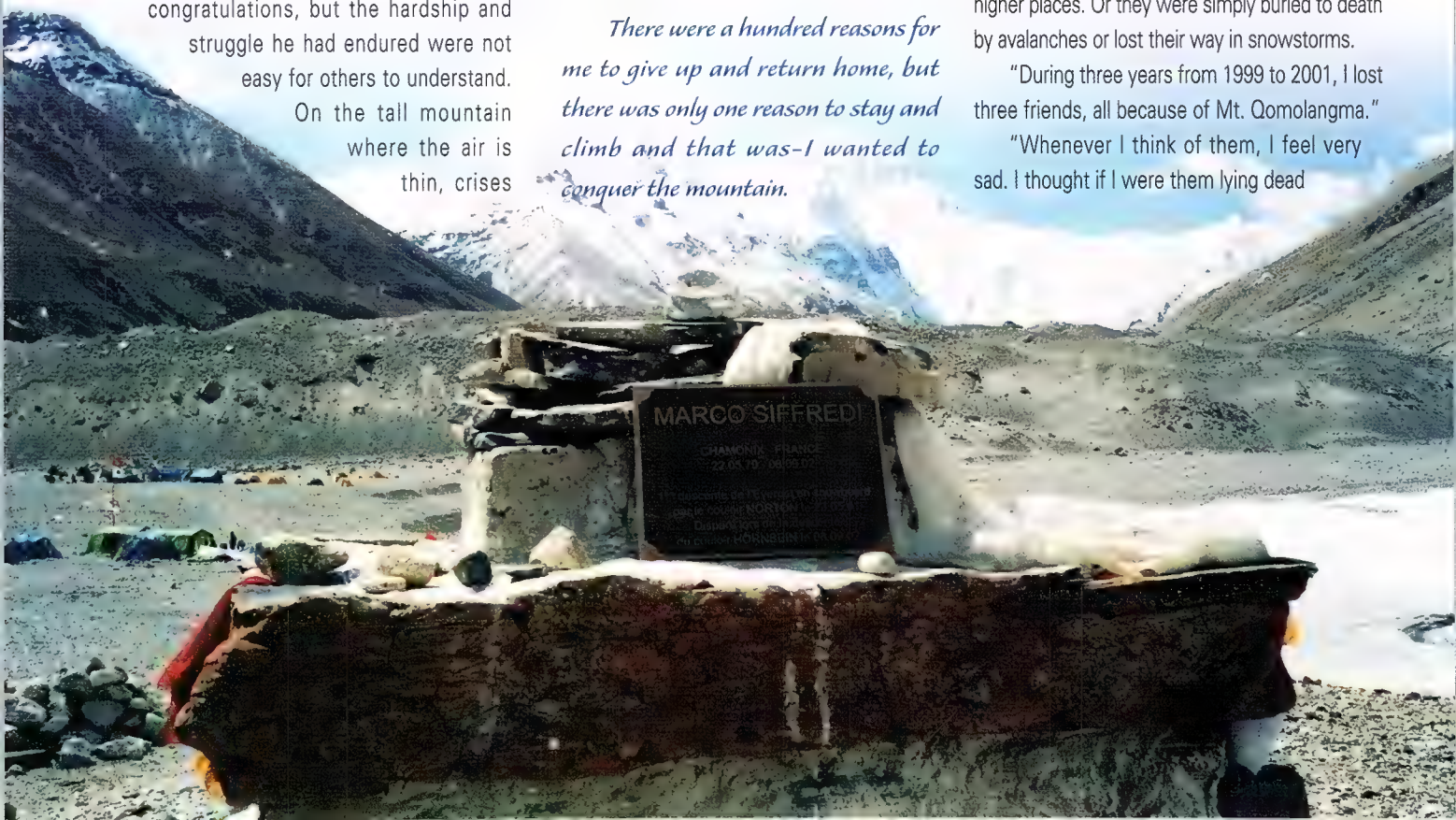
"Many others were less fortunate, however. They got encephaledema as a result of mountain sickness and went blind. Those who were not carried down the mountain early enough would die.

"Some were killed by rocks and oxygen containers rolling down from higher places. Or they were simply buried to death by avalanches or lost their way in snowstorms.

"During three years from 1999 to 2001, I lost three friends, all because of Mt. Qomolangma."

"Whenever I think of them, I feel very sad. I thought if I were them lying dead

There were a hundred reasons for me to give up and return home, but there was only one reason to stay and climb and that was—I wanted to conquer the mountain.





1. At the camp 8,300m above sea level on the northern slope, oxygen bottles left by mountaineers can be seen. According to Chung, Nepalese authorities collect these bottles from Sherpas at US \$10 per piece, to clean up the garbage on Mt. Qomolangma.
2. A tombstone dedicated to a French youth at the base camp of Mt. Qomolangma. He was reported missing while sliding in the snow in 2002. His body still has not been found. At the foot of Mt. Qomolangma, there are more than 20 such tombstones.
3. Chung Kin Man on his way up the mountain from base camp on Mt. Qomolangma, seen at a location 6,000m above sea level.
4. At 7,500m above sea level, this is where the three teams from the UK, Switzerland and New Zealand camp.

in the ice and snow without anyone taking notice of me or having me properly buried, how lonely I would have been."

Though physically tough and strong, Chung's voice was choked by emotion.

"Whenever I go mountain climbing, I remind myself of three possibilities: one is that I will return safely but be unable to ascend the mountaintop which is not a bad result.

"Two, I conquer the mountain and return safely which is the best result. And three, I will never return, which is something I must prepare for."

Concentrating on Success

Chung finally succeeded, allowing his friends and family to breathe a sigh of relief. He told me that the key to his success this time was to totally forget about himself.

"During the first few attempts, I had many worries, fearing for my family and business. This time I threw away all those thoughts and concentrated on climbing. Because I knew there were a hundred reasons for me to give up and return home, but there was only one reason to stay and climb. I wanted to conquer the mountain."

Before he set out, he studied how to prevent and cure altitude conditions such as encephaledema and pneumonedema. Adequate preparations ensured safety.

Safety First

"A British friend who went climbing with me this time discovered that he did not have enough oxygen in his bottle at the



Afterall, maintaining one's life is the key to success."

Enjoying Life

Chung's success created a great sensation. For more than a month after he returned to Hong Kong, he was busy doing interviews with the newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations, and giving lectures to schools.

"Friends asked me why I was so keen on publicity, and I thought that if the media told people about my story, more people in Hong Kong would feel that they could do it too, which is not a bad thing."

"Perhaps the fact that people showed so much interest was because the SARS crisis had just ended, and they needed some encouraging news."

No need to worry that Chung would lose his head because of the media attention. Right now, he thinks that enjoying life is more important than forcing himself to pursue greater challenges, and his next trips (Mt. Emei and Huangshan) will be much more mild.

Translated by F. Huang

Afterword

In order to interview Chung Kin Man, I went to his shop three or four times. Each time I found him busy, either answering questions from reporters, being photographed or replying to customers who had many curious questions for him.

No wonder he said that the first week after his return, he never had time to really take a rest. No pain, no gain, as the saying goes.

Now that he is famous, how much has his business grown?

"Erm, erm," he thought for a while and smiled shyly.

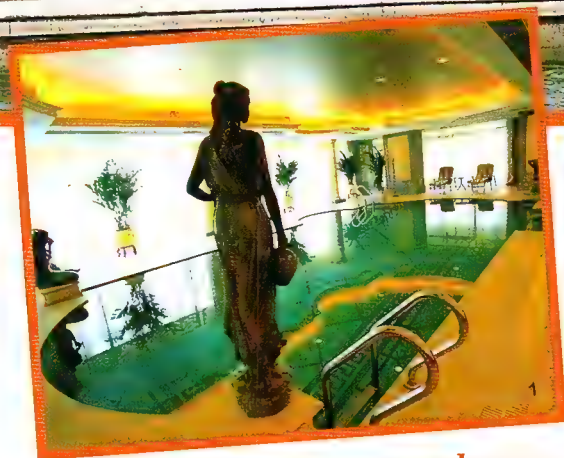
"About 20 percent!" Not a bad result, all round.



Staying at the Paradise for Egrets

Photos & Article
by Hua Nian

—Nanhai Fontainebleau Hotel



"Fontainebleau?" Upon hearing the name of this hotel in the Nanguo Taoyuan Tourism and Holiday Resort in Nanhai District, Foshan, I immediately thought of the Fontainebleau in Paris, France. Visiting Fontainebleau, a place where many famous painters of the 19th century gathered, has been my dream since childhood.

Because of the enchanting name of this hotel, I decided to stay there, next to the "Paradise for Egrets" in the tourism and holiday resort.

Fontainebleau in China

Despite the name, I had not really expected to find an atmosphere matching the Gallic flavor promised by the grand title, but I was pleasantly surprised.

The main building is a grand French architecture that faces a European-style garden square of over 80,000 m².

My room overlooked the garden, forest, mountain and a vast lake at a distance. I was happy to find that some of the major tourist attractions in Nanguo Taoyuan are very close by, such as Nanhai Film and TV City, Nanhai Temple to the Goddess of Mercy, Recreational City, the Countryside Club, and the golf course.

Luxury Villas

There are two villa sections on one side of the main building. Section B consists of several two-story villas, suitable for medium-sized families, and Section A has three villas of a level of luxury that



made me gasp in admiration.

The most luxurious is the three-storey Xiaofeng Villa, with a total of 11 rooms, decorated in both Chinese and Western styles. Magnificent and graceful, this villa includes living rooms, study, meeting room, dining room, kitchen, swimming pool, sauna, gym, tennis court, British-style billiard room, table tennis room, and hotel attendants to cater for your every whim. Of course, the price for this luxury is very high, 36,800 yuan for the whole villa.

Greeting Egrets in the Morning

This hotel has both Chinese and Western restaurants. The Ches Seafood Restaurant in the hotel serves excellent Chinese food, as Nanhai District in Foshan City enjoys a good reputation for its cuisine. However, the Fengfei Western Restaurant hired its main chefs from France, is also another exceptional choice.

Other than the fine restaurants, the sauna area is very luxuriant and elegant as well. There is a hydro massage pond, high-pressure shower, sauna and steam-room, and the cost of a two-hour massage is 1,080 yuan.

"Paradise for Egrets", the home of white and gray egrets, is only a few minutes walk away. White egrets leave early in the morning and

return late at night, while the gray egrets leave late in the morning and return early at night. People get the best view of them when hundreds of birds return at dusk.

Translated by Kuang Peihua

Nearby Tourist Attractions:

The Paradise for Egrets: It is a two-minute walk from the hotel to the Duck Lake. The bamboo forests between the lake and the hotel are home to 20,000 white and gray egrets.

Nanhai Film & TV City: With an area of 22,500 ha, you will find a lot of temples, a water battlefield and a land battlefield. Excellent combat performances are performed regularly. (Tel: 757-5233998/ 5233238)

Nanhai Temple of Goddess of Mercy: About one kilometer southeast of the hotel, this large and magnificent temple has a long history. (Tel: 757-5233633)

Countryside Club: To the south of the hotel, the Countryside Club faces the Fontainebleau Hotel across Fengdan Road. (Tel: 757-5233388)

Nanguo Taoyuan Recreational City: It is a 10-minute walk from the Fontainebleau Hotel to the Recreational City of Taoyuan Zhonglu, which includes a nightclub, Karaoke rooms, gyms, and a bowling hall. (Tel: 757-5233977/ 5233200)

Phoenix Scenic Zone: This scenic zone offers beautiful lakes and mountain landscapes, singing birds, fragrant flowers and oddly shaped rocks. (Tel: 757-5233023)



1. This is a private pool saved for one of the villas in Section A.
2. The main building is a grand French architecture that faces a European-style garden square of over 80,000 m².
3. The hotel offers massage and sauna.
4. Paradise of Egrets is only walking distance away from the hotel.
5. This hotel adopts the luxurious European design.

Western food served
at the Fengfei
Western Restaurant



American tender
beef and shrimps
128 yuan



French-style goose
liver and rose salad
80 yuan



Coconut,
abalone and
chicken soup
38 yuan



French-style
braised duck
breast with
fragrant
oranges
80 yuan

Travel Tips

Add: Fengdan Road, Nanguo Taoyuan Tourism and Holiday Resort,
Songgang Town, Nanhai District, Foshan City, Guangdong Province
Tel: (86) 757-5232288 Fax: (86) 757-5231603 Post code: 528234
Website: <http://www.ftbl-hotel.com.cn> E-mail: master@ftbl-hotel.com

Transport:

The Nanguo Taoyuan Tourism and Holiday Resort, where the Fontainebleau Hotel is located, is between Guangzhou and Foshan cities, 12 km from either city. People from Hong Kong can go to Guangzhou or Foshan by train, and then take a bus to Nanguo Taoyuan. The scheduled buses are as follows:

- * **Shuttle tourism bus in Guangzhou:** 8:00~20:00 (Leaves from Liuhua Station in Guangzhou)
Jinhan Station of Guangzhou-the southern gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Nanhai Temple to Goddess of Mercy-the northern gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Film and TV City
- * **Shuttle tourism bus in Foshan:** 8:00~18:30
Shiwan Nanfeng Guzao-Ancestral Temple in Foshan-Liangyuan-Foshan University-Zhongshan Park-the railway station-Dali-Songgang-Nanguo Taoyuan-Temple to Goddess of Mercy-Nanhai Film and TV City
- * **Foshan-Guangzhou Special Bus:** 6:10~20:10 (Buses leave every 30 minutes)
Guan Station-Qungang-Buxin-Film and TV City-the northern gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-the western gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Songgang-Dali-Dali Expressway-Guangzhou Huancheng (Liuhua) Station
- * **No.6 Bus in Foshan:** 6:30~19:30 (Buses leave every 30 minutes)
Foshan City Passenger Station-Communication Building-Dali-Songgang-the western gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Ma'angang-Guan Station
- * **No.8 Bus in Foshan:** 6:00~19:30 (Buses leave every 30 minutes)
Foshan City Passenger Station-Communication Building-Dali-the southern gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Puxin-Heshun
- * **No.19 Bus in Foshan:** 6:20~20:10 (Buses leave every 20 minutes)
Xijiao Station-Nanzhuang-Zidong-Wuzhuang-Luocun Village-Shadi Airport-



Country Club at the back garden

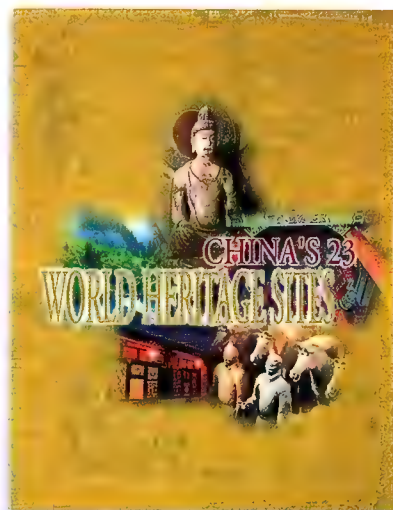
Yongbiao-Zhenbiao-the western gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-the northern gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Film and TV City-Linan-Guan Station

- * **No.22 Bus in Foshan:** 6:10~20:30 (Buses leave every 20 minutes)
Guan Station-Ligang-the northern gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Film and TV City-Dragon Head Village-Songgang-Libei-Dali-Hengjiang-Huangqi Town Government-Huangqi No.1 City
- * **No. 38 Bus in Foshan:** 6:45~20:45 (Buses leave every 20 minutes)
Foshan City Passenger Station-Zhongshan Park-Foping Road-Communication Building-Nanhai Station-Guilan Road-August First Xunhu (Beep)-Dong'er Nanshi-Foshan City Government-Post Office-Guijiang Road-Yayao-the southern gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Nanhai Temple to Goddess of Mercy-the northern gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Film and TV City-Puxin-Guan-Hefeng-Heshun
- * **Bus No. 44 in Foshan:** 6:45~20:10 (Buses leave every 20 minutes)
Yanbu-Beicun Village-Shayong-Beisha-Film and TV City-the northern gate of Nanguo Taoyuan-Ligang-Guan Station

Prices for the Guestrooms:

Standard guestroom: 698 yuan; Luxury guestroom: 788 yuan
Standard suite: 1,188 yuan; Luxury suite: 1,688 yuan
Administrative suite: 2,288 yuan; Luxury duplex: 8,888 yuan
Villas in Section A: 16,800 - 36,800 yuan
Villas in Section B: 2,180 - 3,980 yuan

China's 23 World Heritage Sites



Today, more than 580 cultural and natural sites have been placed on UNESCO's World Heritage list. China, one of the world's four ancient civilisations, also has its share of these heritage sites. Up to 1999, 23 sites in the country have been honourably put on the list. These include the Mountain Resort in Chengde, the Temple of Heaven, the Ruins of Zhoukoudian, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the ancient city of Pingyao, Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum in Xi'an, Wulingyuan, Huanglong, Jiuzhaigou, Mount Emei, the ancient town of Lijiang, Potala Palace, Mount Wudang, Mount Taishan, Confucius' Temple,

Mansion and Cemetery in Qufu, Suzhou Gardens, Mount Huangshan, Mount Lushan, Mount Wuyi and Dazu Rock Carvings.

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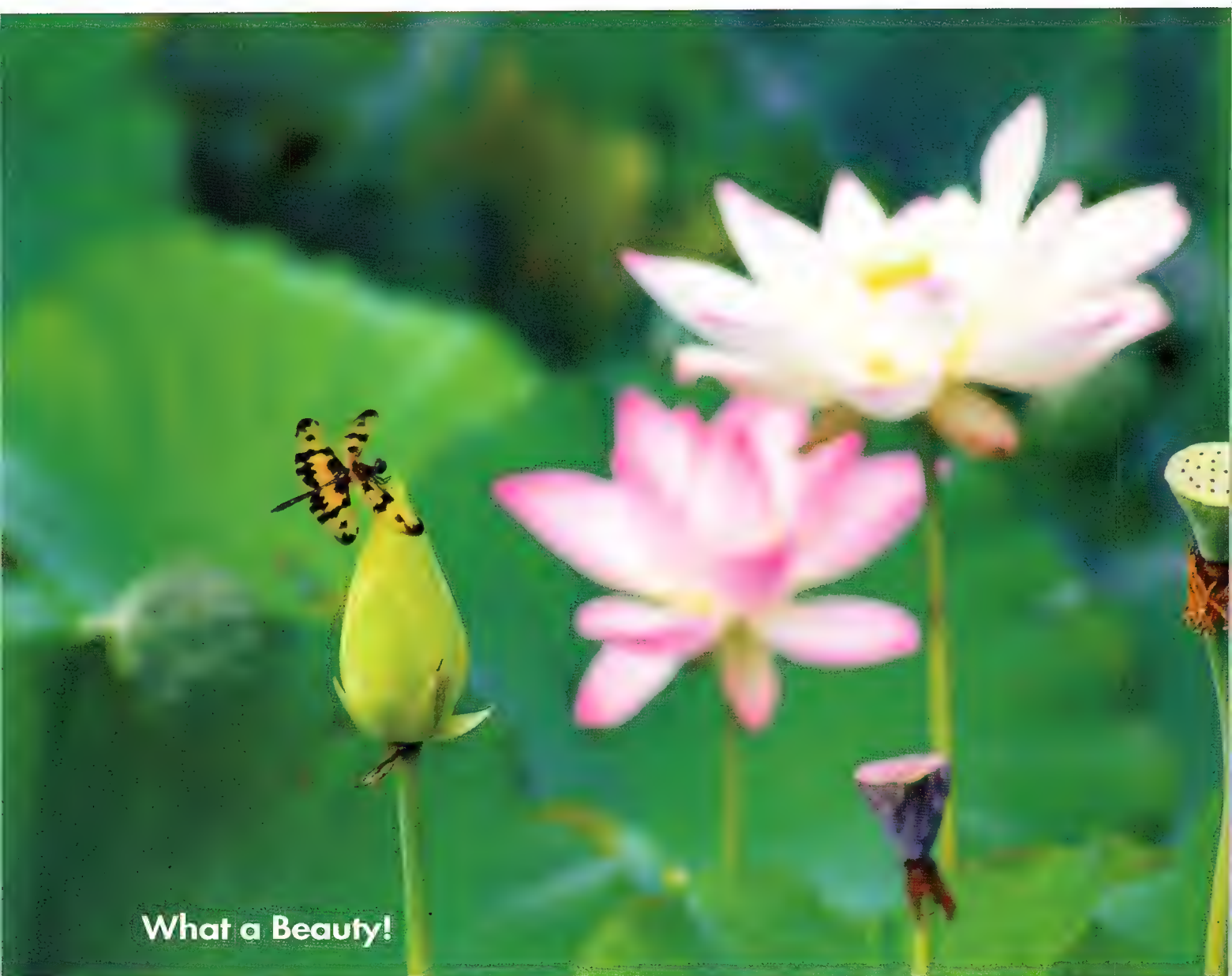
HOT OFF THE PRESS

China's 23 World Heritage Sites

The Darting Dragonflies

of Hong Kong

Photos and Article by Zhou Congling



What a Beauty!

When you wander in the wilderness or walk by rivers and ponds, have you ever stopped to marvel the beauty of dragonflies? Aren't you amazed about its diversity? In the midst of summer, when the air pressure is low, or shortly before a thunderstorm, hundreds of dragonflies would be dancing about like butterflies, and there are too many of them to be captured in one photograph.

Elegant Creature



Though Hong Kong is small, the wetland of the New Territories is home to over a hundred varieties of dragonfly. New species are being discovered each year, and they arouse curiosities and interests of many photographers. Places like Sha Lo Tung, Luk Keng, Shap Long, Lamma Island and Ping Che are all ideal spots to take pictures of dragonflies.

Touring the New Territories

I grew up on an island, and that's why I'm really in touch with nature. When I ran into problems, I would automatically head outdoors, to see the flowers and birds, sunrise and sunset, to put my problems in perspective.

As long as my soul is opened to nature, it will become a source of inspiration to me. I find new ways to express what is good, truthful and beautiful. While many photographers like to travel around the world to take pictures, I find it equally pleasurable touring the New Territories on foot in all four seasons.



Graceful Figure

Stunning Pose



Photographing dragonflies

I have been photographing dragonflies in Hong Kong for 18 years. I like photographing them because they have beautiful shapes and postures. Whenever I see them dancing among the lotus flowers, I remember an old poem: "Flowery butterflies are often seen, dragonflies dart above water with elegance. They come and go with the season, there will be another time for us to meet".

Wind or rain, I go out every summer to capture the graceful figures of the dragonflies. However, development in the New Territories in recent years has replaced the wetland with new houses. The ecosystem has changed, there are fewer trees and ponds. I sincerely hope that people can get together to protect nature, so that our children would have the opportunity to see the beautiful dragonflies in the suburbs.



Translated by F. Huang



Delicate Movement

Understanding dragonflies

One of the earliest flying features on earth, a dragonfly has six feet and four wings. Scientists even discovered fossils of dragonflies whose wings extended to 24 inches! Over time, they have shrunk to the size today. Dragonflies are the champions in wing-flapping, for they can flap up to 20 to 30 times each second.

Dragonflies have veins on their wings and compound eyes. Each eye boasts more than 28,000 pairs of "crystal-like chips", and because it is so close to their head, it gives them a high degree of vigilance and a better vision than many other insects. A beneficial insect, a dragonfly eats some 600 smaller insects, mainly flies and mosquitoes.

When dragonflies skim across the surface of water, it means that they're giving birth. The eggs left on the water will then hatch into dark yellowish chrysalises with six feet. They climb onto the leaves of trees as they grow. In early morning they struggle out of the water to tender tree branches as their bodies begin to grow. They are ready to fly once their wings are strong enough. After their shells are shaken off, they have three months to live.



A Great Dancer

Tips for photographers

Season: June to September

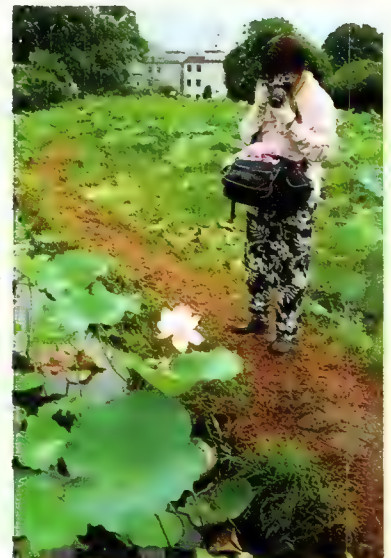
Location: Sha Long Tung, Luk Keng, Shap Long, Lamma Island, and Ping Che.

Timing: Dragonflies can only be seen after 11:00 am or after sunset.

Lens focus: If I am photographing dragonflies against the background of a lotus pond, I like to use a 200mm or 600mm zoom. Being too near will scare them off. Pay attention to the layout in the photograph and press the shutter when you see a dragonfly tilt up its tail.

Capturing the subject: The technique for photographing dragonflies is not the hardest part. The key is being very careful and thoughtful to catch the right moment.

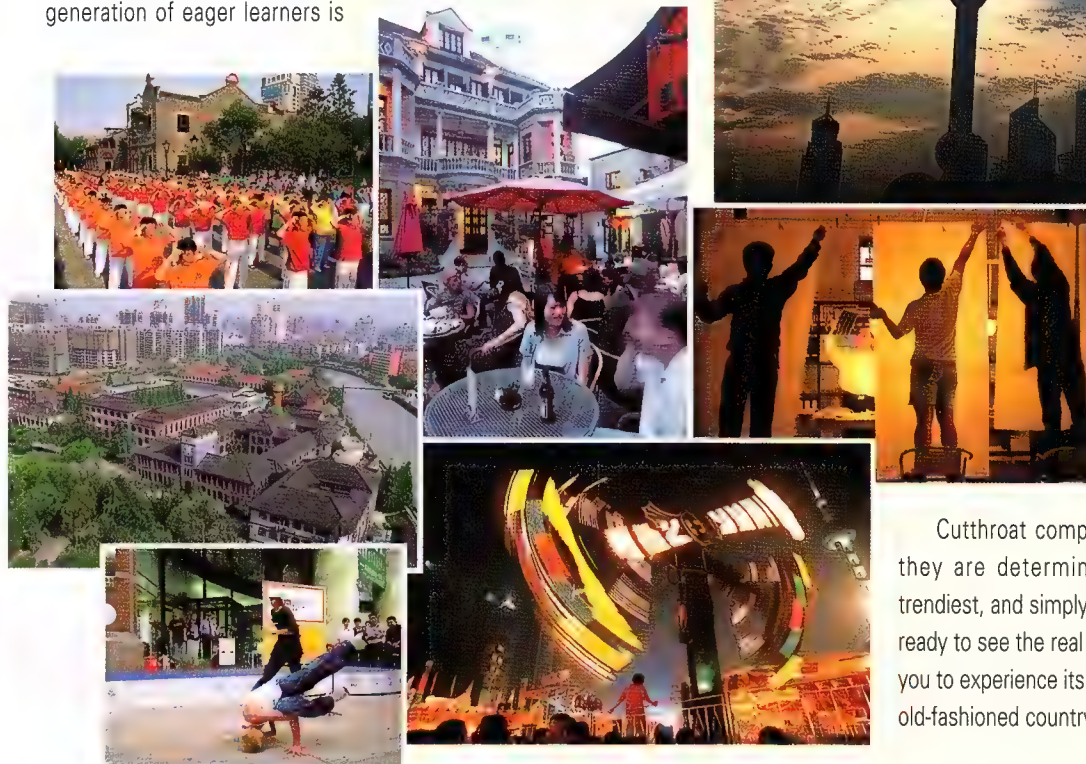
Miscellaneous: Since dragonflies are highly vigilant, you have to be very patient. Perhaps you should take along a little stool, a sun umbrella and enough drinking water, as it sometimes takes a long time to get a good shot.



Feature Story: Shanghai

Shanghai has always been the brightest star of China, and she knows it.

This rising metropolis is sophisticated, vain, and filled with foreigners, cunning businessmen and opportunists. The new generation of eager learners is



incredibly sharp; they tune directly to the global channels and absorb the latest happenings like a sponge.

Cutthroat competition is welcome here, for they are determined to be the newest, the trendiest, and simply the best they can be. Are you ready to see the real Shanghai? This time we'll take you to experience its dynamic nightlife as well as its old-fashioned country charm.

Profile: Zheng Yunfeng

Zheng is a tough man who has the tenderest heart.

Down to earth and idealistic to the bone, he spent millions dollars and devoted six years of his life living on a boat for one mission: taking photos of the Three Gorges. He is tough because he can go after his dreams despite hardship and ridicule.

He is vulnerable because his passion for the river and the people often breaks him down emotionally. More than once, he cried with the people as he was taking pictures of them.

Combining iron-will and sensibility, perhaps Zheng has the best gifts for a photographer.



On the Way: Holy Mountain and Sacred Lake

Believers of the Tibet Buddhism and Hinduism take their pilgrimages very seriously. The pilgrimage is an act of repentance, and each journey involves circling their Holy Mountain, Kangrinboqê Peak, and worshipping at the sacred Nam Co Lake on an annually basis. Although the trip is harsh, believers trust that their hearts will be blessed in the end.





Venturing alone to the Devil City

Article and
photos by Li
Xuliang

In the vast deserts of Xinjiang, there is the wind-eroded land of Ulshe in Karamay, Qatun in the north of the Tianshan Mountains and Hami in East Xinjiang. The wind-eroded landforms (or Yardang landform in geological terms) were formed by ruthless wind and soil erosion over hundreds of millions of years. The Yardang areas are frequently assailed by strong wind, which whistles and howls that sound like wailing ghosts, hence the name, Devil City.

Visiting the Devil City requires a pioneering spirit and good outdoors skills.



Quando Devil City is located in the desert, 280 km northwest of the seat of Qitai County. There is no road from the county seat to the Devil City, with only a 190-km path leading to the vast desert. During my first trip to the area with a friend, the weather was bad for three days and we had to return in disappointment. Although I did not take any pictures, the majestic landforms left an unforgettable impression on me.

With some experiences, from my first trip, I decided to go to Devil City alone this time around. I prepared food and water, and set out in the early morning. When my vehicle reached to the end of the path, there were nothing but sharp rocks scattered all over the desert hills in the shape of steamed bread covered by wild grasses, and a deadly quiet desert. Facing the vast desert alone for the first time, I felt abandoned and truly alone.



▲ **The Devil City of Karamay City**
Location: Urhe in Karamay
Shutter: 1/30 second **Aperture:** F16

Marking My Trail with Food

After leaving the path behind, I looked for a high peaks every few kilometers, where I made a mark and buried some food and a few bottles of water to prevent me from getting lost on my way back. Even if my vehicle were to break down, I could walk back relying on the food and water.

At about 6:00 p.m., I saw small mounds, known as Yarden landforms. Due to wind and rain erosion over the past hundred million years, they look like ancient castles: simple, primitive, colorful, ancient and natural. Looking at this unusual scenery, I was hopeful to take some wonderful pictures this time.

Standing on a large mound, and taking a look around, I was astonished at the undulating ravines and red mounds. I got the camera ready, waiting for the perfect light.

It seemed the weather had deliberately set itself against me. It rained heavily and the wind blew hard. All of a sudden, the Devil City became a true ghastly castle. The rainwater running down from the

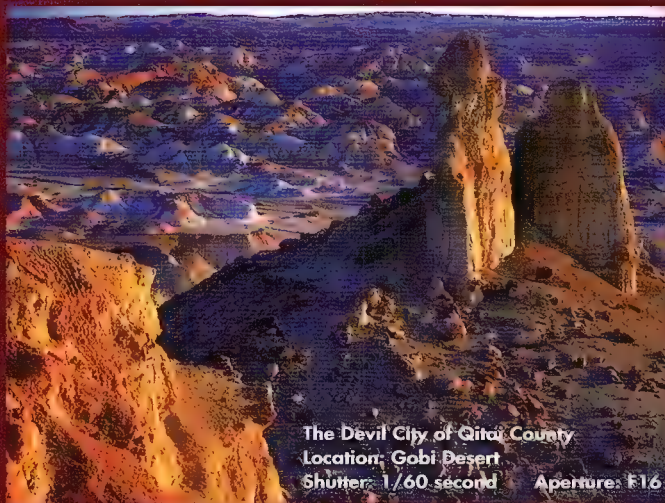


▲ **The Devil City of Qitai County**
Location: Gobi Desert
Shutter: 1/30 second **Aperture:** F22

castle became dark red mud, raindrops falling in water depressions created bubbles, like numerous gray eyes, and the wind going through the ravines gave out a horrible whistling sound. I decided to leave as soon as possible, but it was getting too dark, and I had no choice but to sleep the night in the car.

Scared to Death by the Wolves of the Yarden

I turned on the stereo, and gradually fell asleep listening to the music. When I was woken by the wind, it was just light. I had not eaten any hot food for two days, so I wanted to drink some hot water. I got out of the car, picked some wet tree branches, and poured some gasoline on them, trying to light a fire to boil some water. I tried several times, but failed because of the strong wind. I looked around, and found a cave in a Yarden. I was glad to find shelter from the rain. I walked toward the cave, holding some



The Devil City of Qitai County
Location: Gobi Desert
Shutter: 1/60 second Aperture: F16

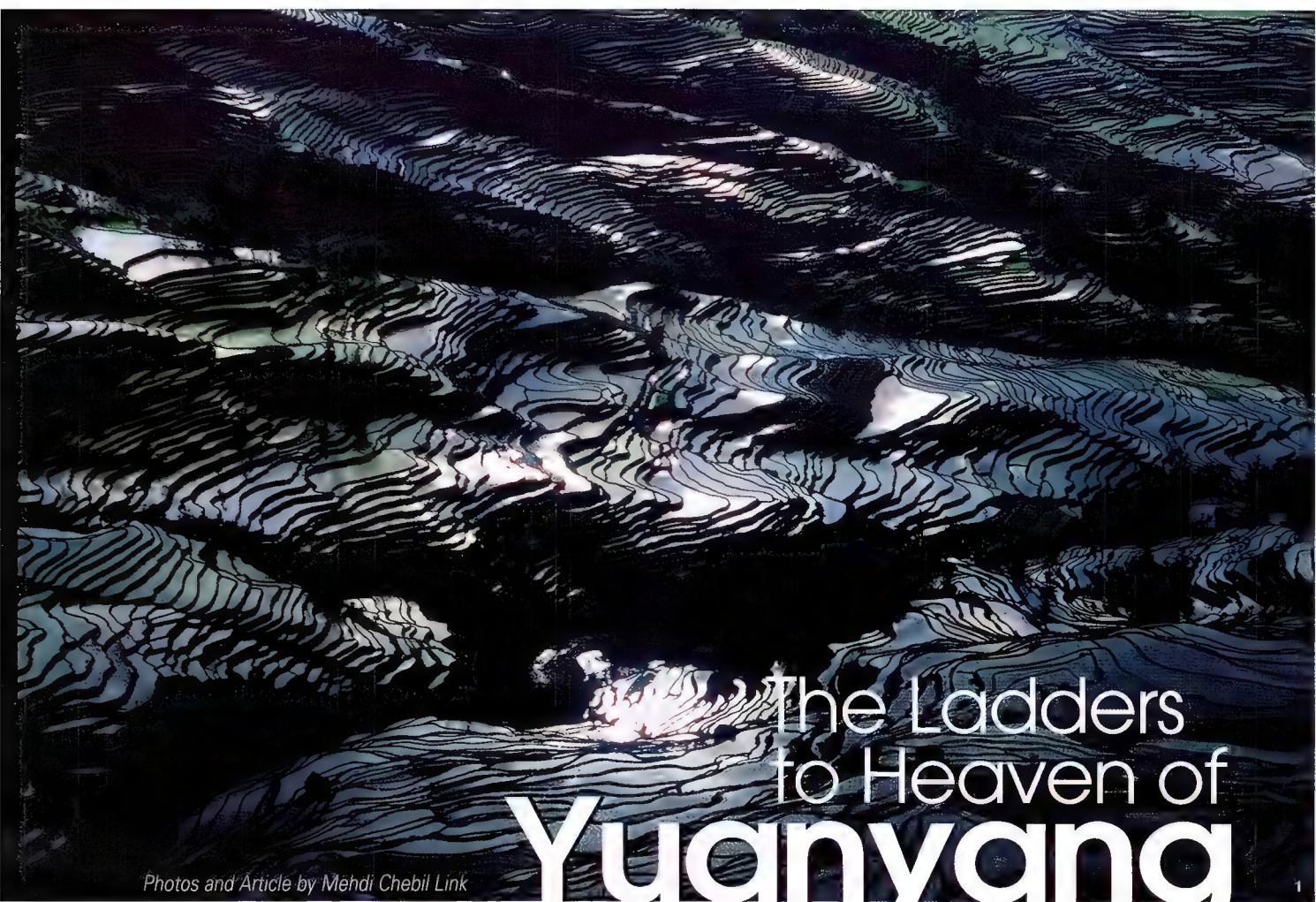
tree branches in my arms. Suddenly I caught sight of a pile of wolf dung. I hesitated, then picked up a stone and threw it into the cave. As soon as the stone had dropped to the ground, two black shadows ran out of the cave. I was so scared that I broke into a cold sweat. After I had calmed down, I turned back, seeing an eagle flying away.

It was getting light, and the wind and rain stopped.

The horrible Devil City was surrounded by white mist, and only the top could be seen. I guessed that it was returning to its original features. But the devil is evil by nature, even if it puts on a beautiful coat in the morning. After the experience of that horrible night, I had a new understanding of the area. The mist gradually dissipated, and the sun rose. It seemed the Yarden had woken from a nightmare, and stretched itself under the morning sun.



The Devil City of Qitai County
Location: The Gobi Desert
Exposure: Several exposures. I used a U2 lamp for the exposure of the front scene, which was followed by two exposures, plus the moonlight.



The Ladders to Heaven of Yuanyang

Photos and Article by Mehdi Chebil Link

I first heard of Yuanyang after meeting a Japanese professional photographer, while travelling in the mountainous landscapes of Guilin. I remember him mentioning “the Ladders to Heaven” as the most photogenic spot in China, a name that immediately caught my imagination. He told me that “Ladders to Heaven” was the name given to the Yuanyang terraced fields by the local Hani minority people.

1. Yuanyang County is famous for its impressive terraced fields spreading over hundreds of square meters.
2. The head of a buffalo, the most precious animal for Yuanyang county villagers.



2

The fact that this destination was unknown to overseas visitors made me even more curious. I have never forgotten this conversation, and when I arrived in Yuanyang County, southern Yunnan, a few months later, I was impatient to see for myself. My bus hauled its way through the night, and I could feel we were gaining altitude only because the air seemed much cooler.

The following morning was a great surprise. Yuanyang is a small town perched on a mountain peak. The streets are so steeply inclined that stairways had to be built to connect various neighborhoods. This is definitely not a bicycle-friendly place. The town centre is a large square with 12 sculptures depicting the animals of the Chinese zodiac.



1. A Yi minority woman looking at the terraced fields behind her.
2. These Yi minority women are collecting the green shoots of rice.
3. A Hani minority woman bargaining hard at Yuanyang market.
4. A Yi minority woman meeting her daughter after a long day in the fields.
5. The terraced fields of Yuanyang County in late afternoon.

More than Yuanyang itself, the surroundings are truly breathtaking: rice terraces, forested mountains, and deep valleys dotted with tiny minority villages. Market day is the chief attraction for the people of nearby villages and hundreds of women in colorful clothes flock Yuanyang's streets looking for good business opportunities.

Yuanyang has not reached the celebrity of other Yunnan icons, such as Dali or the Stone Forest, but its reputation among professional photographers is well deserved. The rice terraces here are the finest in China, and among the best in the world. A short exploration of the surroundings area reveals stunning beauty, resulting from three factors.

Firstly, the size of the rice paddies is impressive, covering hundreds of square meters like a gigantic stairway going down the valley, where the Hong river ("Red River" in Chinese) flows. The terraces, said to cover 130km², can stretch so widely that they overcome the human field of vision, and only a wide-angle camera can translate accurately the vastness of the place.

Secondly, the terraced fields in the Yuanyang area are characterized by a great diversity of shapes. While some terraces seem to be constructed with a repetitive and almost geometrical precision, others are very odd-shaped and look surreal when photographed.

The reflection of the sky on the thousands of water filled terraces (between September and May) is equally stunning. Even on the same day, the fields can look completely different depending on whether the paddies reflect a cloudy sky, the sunset, or the twilight.

Compared to other terraced fields across China, Yuanyang terraces are very steep. With binoculars, it's even possible to watch people working in the fields, a hundred meters away. These steep slopes are also vital for bringing water to the rice terraces, and the way the

irrigation system has been built over hundreds of years is simply awesome.

It is a masterpiece of ingenious engineering, making use of

an otherwise apparently inhospitable natural environment. The region is characterised by deep valleys, where powerful rivers flow, and mountains capped by hundreds of square kilometres of forest. When the temperature rises in the valleys, water tends to evaporate and form clouds of white misty fog. These opaque fogs create an enchanting atmosphere and can sometimes look like the typical



famous “sea of clouds” as seen hanging about some China’s sacred mountains.

But in Yuanyang, the mist is indispensable to the efficient work of the terraced fields. As the fog rises across the mountain and reaches the forested areas, it encounters tree branches and leaves and gradually turns back into water. The local people have built more than 4000 canals to channel this water to the rice terraces. As the upper fields get filled, the excess water runs down to the terrace located just below, and so on until the water get back to the river. This eco-system does not waste water and works by itself, providing the Yuanyang people with both a regular food supply, and a stunning landscape attracting visitors.

For centuries, the terraces have been occupied by a myriad of minority people, with the Yi and Hani people making up the bulk. Yuanyang County remains a rural area and the locals have kept their customs, traditions, and fashion, mostly unaffected by modernization. The most obvious sign for outsiders is the ethnic outfit, a true mosaic of brilliant colours, with great pieces available for a reasonable prices in tourist centers.

It is harder to gain an insight into Yi or Hani traditions because most people don’t speak Mandarin. The Hani people are famous



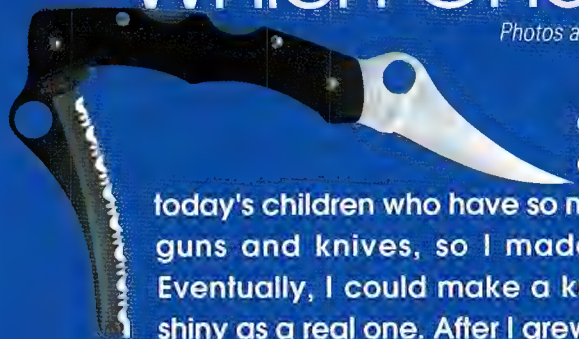
for celebrating a large banquet, where every villager come out to the streets, bringing along their best dishes. After paying respects to their ancestors, people feast and toast in an all-day party celebrating the harvest. Dozens of tables are linked together in the streets, in a shape that gives the event its nickname — “Long Dragon Banquet”.

Taking part in this feast is probably the best way to really understand why the Hani people call this region “Ladders to Heaven”, as it gives a striking example of paradise on earth.



Oh, My Knives, Which One Is the

Photos and Article by Chan Yat Nin



When I was a child, I was not as lucky as today's children who have so many toys. I liked guns and knives, so I made them myself. Eventually, I could make a knife or sword as shiny as a real one. After I grew up, I turned my passion for knives into a hobby of collection. Among what I have collected, there are silver tooth pick and old-fashioned ear cleaner, as well as seven-star Dragon Spring Swords of about a meter long.

In recent years, however, I focus my collection on practical knives that can be used for outdoor activities or travelings. Apart from their usage, their cute design and refined workmanship also attract me. Now I would like to share with you my personal experience in this area.

Multi-functional Army Knife

Most people think that a cutting knife for peeling fruit would be enough for their daily use in a journey. But if you travel solo in the wilderness, you should not neglect the importance of a handy knife. I think you should have at least a multi-functional knife, such as the Swiss soldiers. If you want to carry just one single knife, you must be sure that it's good for use. How should you choose a good knife from

the market since there are so many varieties available, and there may be several types of one brand? Now, using my own collection, I'll give you some examples.

When folded knives are mentioned, people always refer them as the Swiss Army.

Picnic 7, Richartz: HK\$299 (has a knife and a fork installed)



Leatherman (tool knife): around HK\$800 (with at least 14 functions, very powerful)

Sharpest?



Spyterco (folded knife): around HK\$600-1,200 (its sharp blade can meet different needs)

Jungle King, Aitor: HK\$1,327-1,414 (powerful, with many supplements)

But as a matter of fact, there are many local brands to choose from besides the Victorinox from Switzerland. For example, both the German Richartz and the Yangjiang produced in China's Guangdong are quite good. The cost of a Swiss or German product is enough for several Yangjiang knives.

While selecting a folded knife, you must be clear what to look for. A multi-functional one should include a cutting knife, a bottle opener, a can opener, a screwdriver, a pair of scissors, and possibly a wine opener. It would be better if it also has a saw and a file because when you camp in the wilderness, you may need to cut ropes, branches and vines. Following are two unique knives, which, though not cheap, are indeed useful.

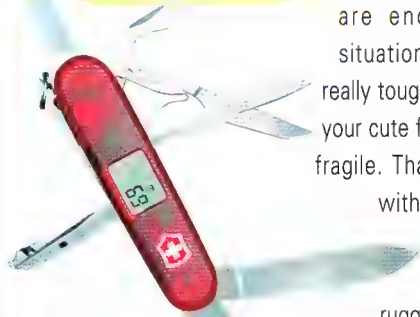
Picnic 7 of Richartz

The German product has a pair of scissors, a cutting knife, wine opener, can/bottle opener, fork and so on. The most amazing thing is that it can be parted into two for serving a meal as knife and fork. The design is smart. You pull out the hidden fork and the body would divide into knife and fork automatically. After you're done, you put your knife and fork in position and fold them, the knife would be locked instantly for safety's sake.

Camp Fame/Swiss Hame

They are two types of Victorinox, with little difference between them. The former has a saw and a mini screwdriver; the latter has a pair of scissors. Each of them has a total of 18 tools, including big and small knives, wine opener, can opener with small screwdriver, bottle opener with big screwdriver and wire-peeler, hole-driller, key ring, tweezers, tooth pick, saw or pair of scissors, multifunctional or mini screwdriver, ball pen, pin, screwdriver for glasses, and lighter. Hidden at the tip of the handle, the lighter produces wind-resistant blue flame. Needless to say, you must be careful. Before checking in your luggage and boarding your flight, you must empty the fuel and refill it with gasoline after you are landed.

Altimeter Thermometer: HK\$612 (with meters for altitude up to 6,000 meters above sea level and -20°C-60 °C respectively)



Multi-functional Tools

The folded knives mentioned above are enough to handle ordinary situations. But when conditions are really tough, you need powerful tools, as your cute folded ones would become too fragile. That is why I sometimes travel with a multi-functional tool knife, which has powerful pincers, saw, file, cutting knife and rugged knife.

The one I often use is Leatherman made in the United States. The type shown at the bottom of this page is my favourite. It has both cutting and rugged knives, file, saw, pincers (with electricity-wire-cutting edge), cross screwdriver, small and large screwdrivers, scissors, drill, thread-piercing ring, and bottle and can openers, etc. The first four tools all have powerful locks, which ensure that once it's open, it will not close unless you press the right button, protecting the user from being injured. Of course, such a tool knife would not be light, but it has a holder for you to hook onto your belt.

For those traveling in the wilderness, the rugged knife and saw are not only useful tools for cutting off branches, vines and ropes, but they are also their guardians. Such knife is so powerful and has so many functions, that you should not travel without it.



Swiss Card: HK\$142 (thin and cute, can be kept in one's purse)



Camp Flame, Victorinox: about HK\$550 (with a wind-resistant lighter in addition to many other compartments)



Special Folded Knife and First-Aid Knife

Unfortunately, no multi-functional knife is good for everything. For one thing, a multi-functional knife has too many compartments, it's often hard to hold onto, and it may even scratch the skin after using it for a long time. Also, when multi-functions knives are stressed, they cannot function well. So I usually bring a couple of bigger, handy and specialized folded knives to deal with various situations in the journey.

In this category, I like the Japanese Spyderco. For ordinary uses, you can use the a sharp knife, which is comfortable to hold onto and good for cutting either fruits or wood. In some cases, you may need to use the one with rugged edge, which is better for cutting ropes and fabrics, as well as juicy and soft food. If you plan to go fishing or hunting, a specialized folded knife will be useful: it has two blades, one is sharp, good for cleaning scales and cutting fish meat; the other, heavier and with rugged edge, for cutting fish and animal skin, or fibers and fruits. These knives can all be hung onto your belt, which makes it convenient for you to reach them whenever you need.

People who have seen the movie First Blood are greatly impressed by the hero's knife, which is a super weapon that solves all kinds of problems. The film may exaggerate, but such knife is indeed useful in emergencies.

Another brand I'd like to introduce is the Italian Aitor. It has three types (I, II, III) of Jungle King in its Survival series. Jungle King I is the most distinctive. In black or green, the knife is powerful and its rugged back can be used as a saw. Inside its handle are hidden various compartments, including a small knife, compass, tweezers, fishing hook and wire, medication bottle, enforced rope, band-aid, safety pins, pencil, needles and thread. In addition, a single-edged multi-functional knife is hidden in its sheath. All of these are useful for your travel in forests or camping in the wilderness. A good knife may save your life.

Translated by Gloria Shang

Shops for Swiss Knives:

Hong Kong Rock-Climbing Training Center
Add: 1K/1st Floor, Garden Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon, Hong Kong;
Tel: (852)27007646/2332, 1259.

Shops for Victorinox, Leatherman and Spyderco:

Victorinox shops at Hong Kong International Airport, Ocean Center at Tsim Sha Tsui, Festival Walk at Kowloon Tong;
Shop for Aitor and Richartz:
Supreme Co., 25/F, 426 Shanghai Street, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon, Hong Kong, Tel: (852)2396 6887.

Hotels in Yunnan

City	Name	Star	Address	Tel
Dali	Yaxing Grand Hotel	****	Ancient City of Dali Tourism Holiday Area	(872) 2670009
	Manwan Grand Hotel	****	Canglang Road, Dal	(872) 2188188
	Cangshan Hotel	***	118, Cangshan Road, Dali	(872) 2171999
	Xiaguan Hotel	***	No.58, Jianshe Road, Dali	(872) 2125859
	Dali Hotel	**	No.1, Jianshe W. Road, Dali	(872) 2125035
	The Erhai Hotel of the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture	**	No.212, Renmin N. Road, Dali	(872) 2125896
	Xiaguan Hotel	**	58 Jianshe Road, Siaguan, Dali	(872) 2125859
	Dali Huayuan Hotel	**	4 Erhe Road South, Dali	(872) 2134121
Kumming	Kunming Hotel	*****	145 Dongfeng East Road, Kunming	(871) 3162063
	Golden Dragon Hotel	*****	575 Beijing Road, Kunming	(871) 3133015
	King World Hotel Kunming	*****	28 South Section, Beijing Road, Kunming	(871) 3138888
	Holiday Inn Kunming	*****	25 Dong Feng East Road, Kunming	(871) 3165888
	Kingsun Hotel Kunming	***	Beijing Road, Kunming	(871) 5149069
	Jinli Hotel Kunming	***	179 Huancheng North Road, Kunming	(871) 5153070
	Tea Garden Hotel Kunming	***	Yongping Road, Kunming	(871) 2559208
	Kunming Baoshan Hotel	***	52 Baoshan Street, Kunming	(871) 3191988
	Jinsui Hotel	**	33 Dongfeng Road West, Kunming	(871) 5310998
	Golden Peacock Hotel Kunming	**	Right side of the Daguan Park, Kunming	(871) 4145558
	Yunlin Hotel Kunming	**	Shilin Town, Lunan, Kunming	(871) 7795410
	Union Hotel Kunming	**	32 Beijing Road, Kunming	(871) 3136965
	Golden Horse Hotel Kunming	**	28 Dongjiao Road, Kunming	(871) 3316868
	Lianhua Hotel Kunming	*	41 Jiaochang Road East, Lianhuachi, Kunming	(871) 5152108
	Chuncheng Hotel Kunming	*	6 — 9 Dongfeng Road West, Kunming	(871) 3163962
Lijiang	Guanfang Hotel Lijiang	*****	Middle Xueshan Road, Lijiang	(888) 5188888
	Lijiang Grand Hotel	*****	Xinyi Street, Dayan, Lijiang	(888) 5128888

Flights to and from Kunming

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing – Kunming	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0750	1105	CA1403
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0850	1155	HU7165
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1225	1530	CA4172
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1650	2000	HU7111
Kunming – Beijing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0805	1105	MU4121
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0845	1140	CA4171
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1200	1450	CA1404
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1940	2240	CA1432
*Shanghai(Hongqiao) – Kunming	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0840	1150	FM451
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1140	1430	FM452
	1 3 4 5 6	1805	2220	MU4546
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0810	1055	MU4541
*Kunming – Shanghai(Hongqiao)	1 3 5	1250	1645	MU4579
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1605	1850	FM452
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0830	0930	3U461
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1645	1750	MU2415
Chengdu – Kunming	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1820	1915	3U465
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2055	2155	CA4411
Kunming – Chengdu	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1010	1110	3U462
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1245	1355	CA4414
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1845	2000	MU2416
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2105	2205	MU4771
Chongqing – Kunming	3 6	0950	1050	MU4722
	5 7	1025	1125	MU7419
	1 3 4 5 6	1310	1410	CZ6403
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1630	1730	MU5447
Kunming – Chongqing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1850	2005	CA4437
	3 6	0805	0910	MU4721
	2 3 5 7	1345	1455	CZ6426
	1 3 6	1550	1650	CZ6460
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1825	1930	MU5448
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2045	2150	CA4438

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Guangzhou – Kunming	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0600	0750	CZ6733
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0745	0940	CZ3409
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1055	1300	MU4382
	1 2 4 6 7	1640	1830	CZ3419
Kunming – Guangzhou	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1840	2030	MU4342
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0825	1010	MU4381
	2 4 6 7	1000	1145	MU4343
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1600	1745	MU4341
Shenzhen – Kunming	1 2 4 6 7	1910	2055	CZ3420
	3 5	2135	2315	CZ3420
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2200	2340	CZ6734
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0855	1205	CZ3459
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0915	1050	ZH985
	2 5	1050	1255	MU4396
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1420	1610	CZ3451
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1810	2000	MU4394
Kunming – Shenzhen	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1915	2105	CA4374
	2 5	0830	1015	MU4395
	3 4 5 6 7	1140	1245	ZH986
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1255	1530	CZ3460
Hong Kong – Kunming	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1520	1705	MU4393
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1635	1825	CA4373
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1655	1850	CZ3452
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1240	1455	MU432
Kunming – Hong Kong	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1330	1535	CZ342
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0950	1140	MU431
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1035	1230	CZ341
	3 4 5	1015	1315	MU462
Bangkok – Kunming	1 2 6	1730	2030	MU466
	7	1900	2200	MU472
Kunming – Bangkok	3 4 5	0815	0915	MU461
	1 2 6	1530	1630	MU465
	7	1700	1850	MU467

* There are two airports in Shanghai, namely Hongqiao and Pudong

Flights to and from Dali

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Chengdu – Dali	4 7	0650	0820	CA4453
Dali – Chengdu	4 7	0900	1020	CA4454
Kunming – Dali	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0655	0730	MU4741
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0715	0745	MU4461
	2 5	1005	1040	MU4449 / 4463
	2 4 6 7	2020	2050	MU4445

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Dali – Kunming	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0810	0840	MU4450
	5	1120	1150	MU4450
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2120	2150	MU4462 / 4446
	3	2220	2300	MU4446
Xishuangbanna – Dali	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1955	2040	MU4462
Dali – Xishuangbanna	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0815	0905	MU4461

Flights to and from Lijiang

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Kunming – Lijiang	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0700	0740	MU4415
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0725	0805	MU4411
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0825	0910	MU4417
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1235	1330	FM451
Lijiang – Kunming	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1835	1915	MU4512
	4 6 7	2005	2045	MU4419 / 4731
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0810	0855	MU4716
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0840	0925	MU4412
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0950	1030	MU4511
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1410	1515	FM452
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2000	2040	MU4418
	4 6 7	2115	2155	MU4732 / 4420

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Chengdu – Lijiang	2 3 7	0650	0815	CA4451
	1	1200	1410	MU4406
	5	1340	1600	MU4406
	2 3 7	0855	1010	CA4452
Lijiang – Chengdu	5	1030	1300	MU4405
	3	1535	1800	MU4405
	1 3 4 6	0855	1230	CZ3487
	2 4 6 7	1710	2020	MU4344
Guangzhou – Lijiang	2 4 6 7	0840	1145	MU4343
	1 3 4 6	1320	1645	CZ3488
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0830	1050	ZH981
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1130	1355	ZH982

* For reference only.

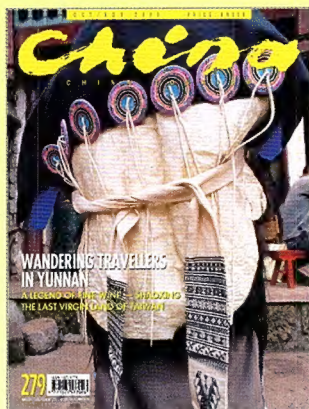
Airline codes:

CA= Air China
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CZ= China Southern Airlines
ZH= Shenzhen Airlines

HU= Hainan Airlines Co Ltd
FM= Shanghai Airlines

SC= Shandong Airlines



Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Wandering Travellers in Yunnan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Legend of Fine Wine – Shaoxing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Last Virgin Land of Taiwan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Great Northern Wilderness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chung Kin Man: Conquering the Heights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
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Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tips for the Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Opinions:					

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☐ Hotel Name: _____ ☐ Others _____

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What do you like most about *China Tourism*?

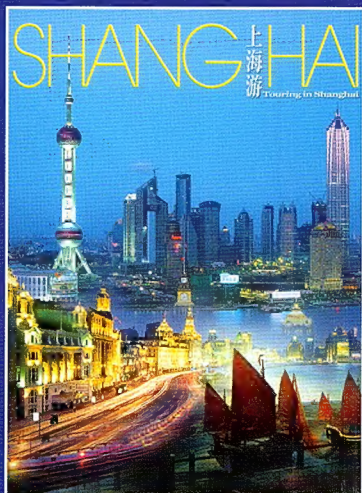
Are you happy with the factual content of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are your suggestions for improvement?

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*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.

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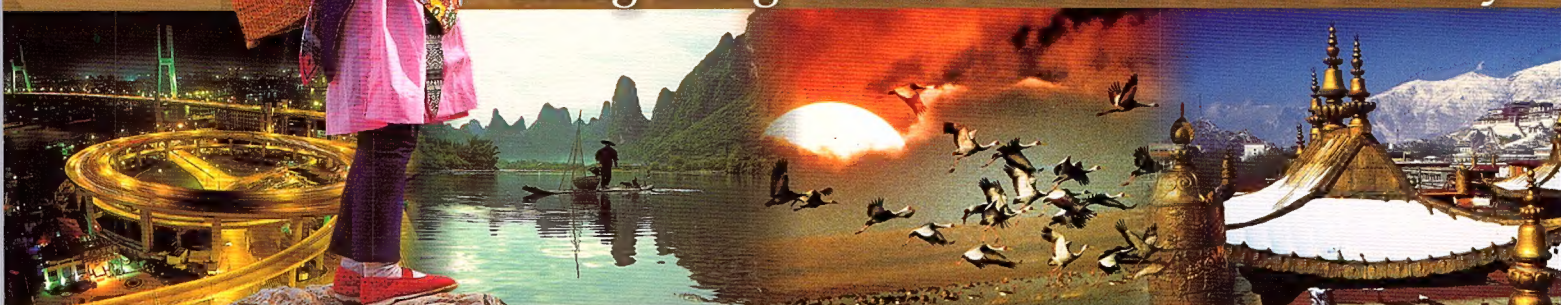
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